











OLIVER CROMWELL

# OLIVER CROMWELL



## HEROES OF ALL TIME

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# OLIVER CROMWELL

BY  
ESTELLE ROSS

*With Frontispiece in Color and Eight  
Black-and-White Illustrations*



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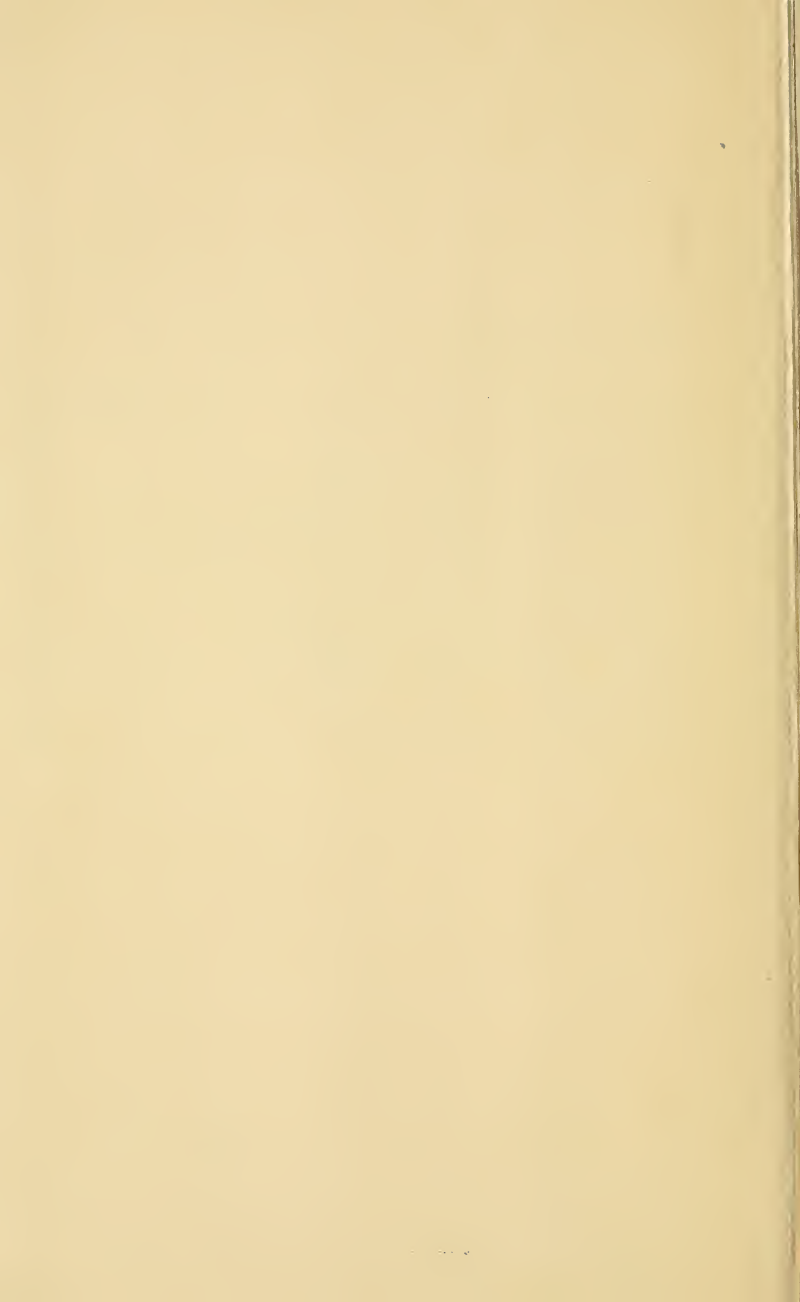
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## CHAPTER I: *The Boy*

**I**N the closing year of the sixteenth century, in the quiet little town of Huntingdon, Oliver Cromwell first saw the light. He was born on April 25, 1599, and baptized at St John's Church on the 29th of the same month and entered in the parish register as "son of Robert Cromwell, gentleman, and of Elizabeth Cromwell, his wife."<sup>1</sup>

Who were Robert and Elizabeth Cromwell? Many years afterward this son, speaking to one of his Parliaments, described his social position in the words, "I was by birth a gentleman, living neither in any considerable height nor yet in obscurity."

Oliver had no reason to be ashamed of his ancestry on either side. His great-grandfather—Richard Williams by name—was a Welshman, and here we have the Celtic strain that fired Cromwell's more sluggish English blood. Richard Williams was nephew of Thomas Cromwell, Wolsey's friend and Henry VIII's minister, known as 'the Hammer of the Monks.' Uncle Thomas liked and advanced his kinsman, and Richard Williams—partly in gratitude, no doubt, partly to insist on the relationship—

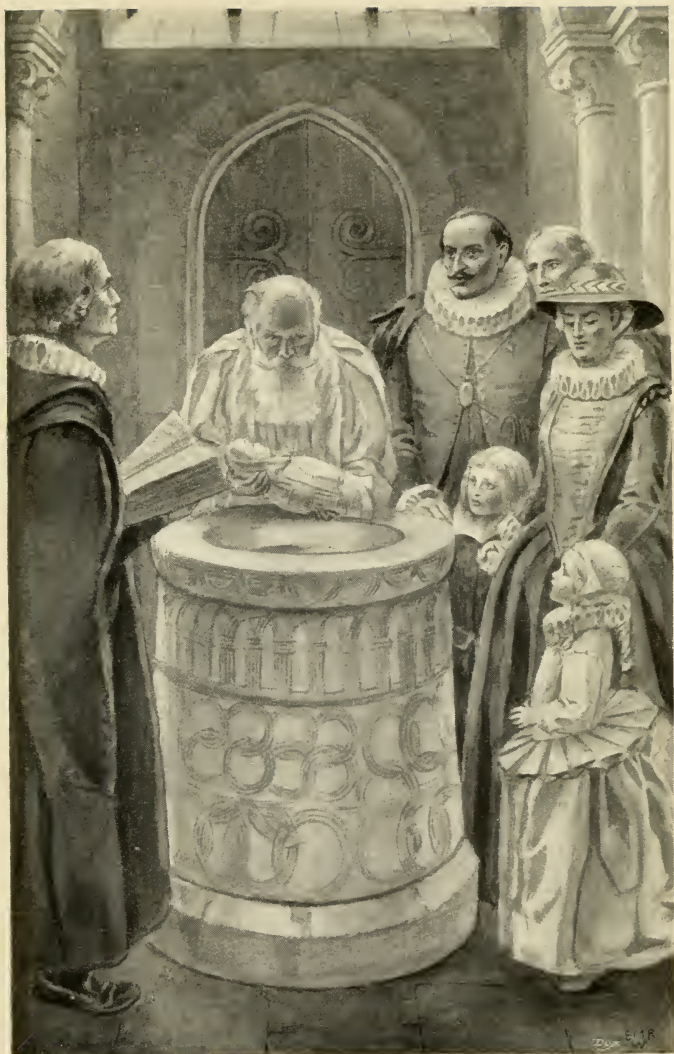
<sup>1</sup>The church no longer stands—it was pulled down a hundred and fifty years ago.

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changed his surname to Cromwell. Thomas Cromwell was, as we know, like Wolsey to sound "all the depths and shoals of honour," like Wolsey to learn the wretchedness of the man who hangs on princes' favours. He it was who, for political purposes, negotiated Henry VIII's marriage with Anne of Cleves. But the lady had been flattered in her picture, and the King, who had expected a Venus, ungallantly dubbed her a "Flemish mare." He had a short way with wives and a short way with ministers: Anne, his fourth wife, was divorced and Thomas Cromwell paid "a long farewell to all his greatness" on the scaffold.

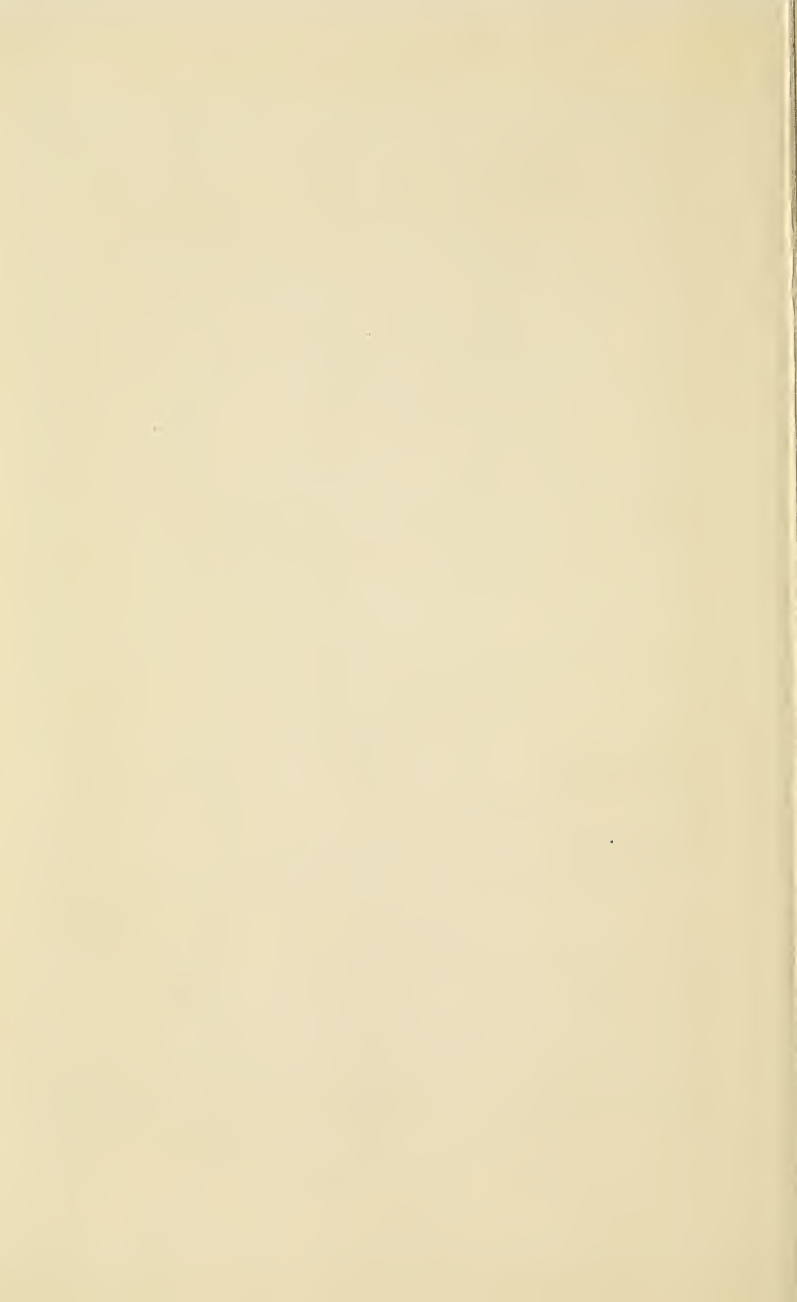
Richard Cromwell, who was knighted at the tournament held in honour of the ill-starred wedding, where his prowess attracted the attention of the royal bridegroom, did not share in his kinsman's disgrace. He appeared at Court clad in black, though the monarch's dislike of mourning was notorious. His boldness was forgiven and he enjoyed the sunshine of princely favour to the end of his days. He had had his share of the spoil of the monasteries, for the Benedictine convent of Hinchinbrook and the rich Benedictine abbey of Ramsey, with their revenues and manors, had fallen to his lot.

It was a goodly heritage for his eldest son, Henry, who carried the fortunes of the Cromwell



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family a step farther, building himself a fine house at Hinchinbrook, where he might entertain with lavish splendour. Great were the preparations for Queen Elizabeth's visit when she was his guest on one of her royal progresses. The Queen dubbed him her knight, and such was his generosity and public spirit that he was known as 'the Golden Knight' to his friends and neighbours. When the Spanish Armada threatened England he trained twenty-six horsemen at his own expense for the defence of the land against "the devilish superstition of the Pope," as he put it.

In the course of time, when Henry was gathered to his fathers, his eldest son, Oliver, inherited Hinchinbrook, and his second son, Robert, an estate in Huntingdon. His daughters married well—one by her union with William Hampden became the mother of the patriot, John Hampden. Robert found his mate in Elizabeth Lynn, a young widow, the daughter of William Steward of Ely. The Stewards were people of good social standing, though there is no foundation for the legend that they could trace their descent from the Stuart kings of Scotland. They belonged to the landed gentry and farmed the cathedral tithes of Ely. Their ancestor, the last Prior of Ely, changed his views in the nick of time when

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the dissolution of the monasteries was making Roman Catholic prelates quake in their shoes, and he remained in office as the first Protestant dean of Ely.

Robert and Elizabeth Cromwell lived in Huntingdon. They were comfortably off, for their joint income of £360 a year would be worth something like £1200 nowadays. Four children had been born to them before their second son, Oliver, came on the scene.

In later years many legends clustered round the childhood and boyhood of Oliver. They must not be taken too seriously, since the earliest biographers saw his character through the veil of their own prejudices. Until our own century justice has not been done to him. A Royalist writer records that "he was of a cross and peevish disposition," but this opinion was balanced by a more favourable observer, who declared that he had "a quick and lively apprehension, a piercing and sagacious wit, and a solid judgment." The truth lies between the two extremes. Throughout his life he was quick-tempered; as a boy he was certainly high-spirited, and probably he was occasionally troublesome also. His parents had their hands too full with the cares of their nine children to pay undue attention to this son, who was followed by three sisters and a brother.

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Gaps soon came in the family. Oliver was but a baby when his eldest sister, a little girl of eight, died; he was old enough to realize the shadow of death when his eldest brother died, and when his youngest brother survived his birth by only a few months.

It is related of Oliver that, in his infancy, he was taken to his uncle's house and laid in a cradle, whereupon a monkey seized him and carried him up to the roof. The agonized household held mattresses below him lest he should be dropped by his captor. Fortunately when the monkey had had enough of his infant charge he brought him down in safety.

Another legend records that at the same house of Hinchinbrook he first encountered the prince with whom he was to come to a death-grapple in later years. Prince Charles, journeying from Scotland to England, was the guest of Sir Oliver Cromwell, and little Oliver, who was invited to meet him, so forgot what was due to Royalty that he fell to fighting him. Prince Charles, who was a fragile child, had much the worst of it, and retired from the struggle with a bleeding nose.

Other stories of Oliver's boyhood are not so hard to believe. He was, no doubt, like many another lad, an 'apple dragon,' and may have been given to pigeon-stealing. The discipline

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of schooldays would have quelled his childish spirits. He was sent to the free school at Huntingdon, where Dr Thomas Beard, a stern Puritan, believed that sinners are not only punished in the world to come, but that retribution dogs their footsteps in this world also. He had written a book entitled *The Theatre of God's Judgments Displayed*, to convince humanity at large of this fact, and he proved it to his scholars by a liberal use of the rod.

It was said that once the schoolboys acted a play called *The Five Senses*. Oliver, wreathed with laurel, was making for the stage when he stumbled against a property crown. He straightway discarded his own headgear, crowned himself, and made a fine speech to his schoolfellows.

At seventeen he left school, and was entered at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, on April 23, 1616. On the same day a great career was closed at Stratford-on-Avon, for Shakespeare's worldly course was run.

Oliver once more came under a strongly Puritan influence, for the head of the college was Dr Samuel Ward, a fine type of man, who had been one of the translators of the authorized version of the Bible. He was a convinced Puritan, and his college was called by Archbishop Laud a 'nursery' of Puritanism.



## The Boy

Oliver was essentially a man of action. In his college days he loved an outdoor life, horse and field exercise, football, cudgels, and boisterous games, rather than severe study. Nevertheless he profited by his academic course, becoming well read in 'Greek and Latin story,' and proficient in mathematics and cosmography—studies he greatly valued. Sir Walter Raleigh's *History of the World* was ever a favourite work with him, but he was never bookish.

His college career was brought to an abrupt close when, in June 1617, his father died, and as he was the only surviving son and his father's heir, he returned home. Ultimately, no doubt, he was to take his sire's place as head of the family, but in the meantime his mother did not consider him fully equipped for his part in life. Little could she foresee what that part was to be! Her highest ambitions for her boy were that he should be an upright country gentleman carrying on the good old traditions of the Cromwell family, becoming eventually a Justice of the Peace and possibly a member of Parliament. With these ideals in view she sent him to London to study law. Whether or not he entered one of the Inns of Court is not definitely known, and though tradition says that he was a student of Lincoln's Inn, there is no record of his name on the books.

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He was now free from parents and schoolmasters, and it was said that he made use of his liberty to sow his wild oats. A letter written many years afterward, when he was thirty-nine, to his cousin, Mrs St John, is quoted as evidence: "You know what my manner of life hath been. Oh, I have lived in and loved darkness, and hated light; I was a chief, the chief of sinners. This is true: I hated godliness, yet God had mercy on me." There is this to be said on the other side. Cromwell became such a deeply religious man that he judged his easy-going youth very harshly, and in all probability his tares grew but a scanty crop.

In London Oliver made the acquaintance of the Bouchiers: Sir James, a wealthy merchant, his wife, and their daughter Elizabeth, a comely girl but a year older than he was. They had a fine town house on Tower Hill and a country home at Felstead in Essex. Oliver fell in love with Elizabeth, and her parents did not look unfavourably on his suit. He was betrothed to her, and when he was twenty-one they were married in the beautiful old church of St Giles, Cripplegate, where we can still read in the parish register the entry which records their union.

## CHAPTER II: *The Period*

**B**EFORE we follow the fortunes of the young bride and bridegroom, let us take a brief survey of a few of the important events that were making English history during Oliver Cromwell's childhood and youth. He was born when Queen Elizabeth, that last and most typical representative of the Tudor monarchs, was on the throne. He must have heard many a description of her in his nursery days, of the splendour of her garments sewn with jewels, of her haughty bearing, of her vanity—in short, all the tittle-tattle about Royalty that is ever welcome gossip. He would have been told how jealous she had been of Mary Queen of Scots, and how, after keeping her for many years in captivity, she had condemned her to death. This had happened a dozen years before his birth, but it was still fresh in people's minds, especially as Elizabeth was now growing old and the heir to the throne was Mary's son, James VI of Scotland. When little Oliver was just beginning to prattle and to try the strength of his sturdy limbs the country was shocked by the news that the Queen, unforgiving to the last, had allowed her favourite Essex to be beheaded. But though the Cromwell household, together with many another, would discuss

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the Earl's fate, the knowledge of it would not cause such a shock of horror as it would to-day. Indeed, such a punishment would be impossible in the twentieth century, but in those days the axe was a swift way of solving difficulties and paying off old scores.

Probably the first public event which really gripped the child's mind was the passing of the great Queen when he was four years old. Her death ended an epoch, and in the new one which dawned when James I succeeded her on the throne the little boy plucking the early prim-roses in the fields around his home was destined to play a leading part.

He was not only to hear of the customary rejoicings at the coronation, but he was actually to see the new monarch on his journey from Scotland to England. Sir Oliver, true to the splendid traditions of his house, received his royal guest at Hinchinbrook, and entertained him with such lavish hospitality that it exceeded that of any other of the King's hosts. Sir Oliver was made a Knight of the Bath, and James honoured his house by three subsequent visits.

What did little Oliver think of the King? Children are not over-critical as to the personal appearance of grown-up people, but no doubt he had his dreams of what a sovereign should be and thought his childish thoughts when his blue

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eyes rested on James, "clad in green as the grass he trod on, with a feather in his cap, and a horn instead of a sword by his side." The King was not an imposing figure, of middle height, and rather stout, with "a rolling eye, a thin beard, tongue too large for his mouth, and weak, tottering legs."

Grave political and religious difficulties—too grave for the child to understand—were to mark the new reign. We shall deal with them in another chapter. But one result of these troubles thrilled the boy of six, when the news spread like wildfire through England that the Roman Catholics had plotted to blow up the Houses of Parliament on November 5, 1605, when the King was to be present to open the session. At the eleventh hour a Catholic noble had been warned by one of the accomplices, and the game was up! Guy Fawkes was caught in the cellar, waiting to fire the powder; the other conspirators fled, and one by one they were tracked to their hiding-places, to forfeit their lives on the scaffold.

Other public events seemed tame after this crisis, especially the tittle-tattle of Court gossip. James I was infatuated by George Villiers, the handsome Duke of Buckingham. He called him 'Steenie' and entirely forgot his dignity as a king in the familiarity of their intercourse.

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Various scandals of Court life were the gossip of the ale-house and the servants. The court ladies got drunk, the unseemly behaviour of the courtiers made men of the older generation shake their heads and hark back to "the stately times of great Elizabeth." With all her faults, James's predecessor never forgot that she was a queen; he, however, considered that the 'divine right' covered a multitude of indiscretions.

School and college days were over and Oliver was beginning to take a personal interest in the affairs of the big world, reading law in London, when Sir Walter Raleigh, having failed to find the river of gold or to keep the peace with the Spaniards, perished on the scaffold. In all probability the young man was among the immense crowd of sightseers who on that chill October morning watched the passing of the great Elizabethan to his doom.



## CHAPTER III: *The Problem of the Age*

EACH age has its own problem to face, its own inheritance of the mistakes of the previous one. The seventeenth century was to see the birth of new ideals which threatened the very existence of monarchy. The country had acquiesced in the rule of the Tudors partly because they were dominant personalities, partly because it required time to recover after the weary conflict of the Wars of the Roses. Then, too, nothing succeeds like success. In Elizabethan days England rose in glory and stood high in the estimation of Europe. National pride was quickened by the defeat of the Spanish Armada and by the voyages of the great seamen, Grenville, Raleigh, and Drake.

The Tudors had the power to force their will on the people. At best such a rule was bad alike for governor and governed; at its worst it was tyranny.

It was the misfortune of the Stuarts that they could not realize that the death of Elizabeth meant the end of absolute sovereignty, and for this lack of understanding the house was doomed.

James I had no sooner ascended the throne of

## Oliver Cromwell

England (thus uniting the Crowns of England and Scotland) than he was made to feel that his new kingdom was in a state of transition and that the era of subservience was at an end. The points of view of King and Parliament were radically different. James, in *The True Law of Free Monarchy*, asserted his belief in the 'divine right of kings'—the sovereign was above all human law and when he obeyed it he did so merely to set an example to his subjects. "As it is atheism and blasphemy to dispute what God can do, so it is presumption and high contempt in a subject to dispute what a king can do, or to say that a king cannot do this or that."

The newly elected members of Parliament were no less emphatic as to their position, and in the 'Apology' which they presented to him the year after his accession they made it perfectly clear. "Our privileges and liberties are our right and due inheritance, no less than our very lands and goods. . . . They cannot be withheld from us, denied or impaired, but with apparent wrong to the whole state of the realm."

In brief the contest was to be this: Had the King sovereign power independently of Parliament or only through Parliament? Was the monarch, in common with his people, subject to the law, or was the law subject to the King?



## *The Problem of the Age*

James was not the man to hold the reins of government at such a time. Though not without intelligence—he has been called “the wisest fool in Christendom”—he was a dull pedant, and had none of that tact which would have helped him to steer a safe course.

But England had not to face the political problem only; there was the religious difficulty as well.

The Reformation had not produced a nation of one mind as to religious observance, though people of that age, lacking the wider vision of our own, still believed that uniformity was possible. There were four main divisions: the Arminians or Anglicans, the Puritans, the Presbyterians, and the Roman Catholics. The first two in some way corresponded to the High and Low Church of to-day, for both were within the pale of the Church of England. Like the Roman Catholics, the Arminians believed in the authority and traditions of the Church. For them the Reformation did not introduce any new form of worship, but simply swept away abuses that had gathered round the old. They retained most of the beautiful liturgy and the symbols of the faith, though they staunchly denied the supremacy of the Pope.

The Puritans, on the other hand, though for the most part they still remained within the

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Church of England, thought that the Reformation had not gone far enough. The old traditions were hateful to them. They desired a purer form of worship founded solely on the Bible. The Book should be diligently studied, not only in order to "justify the ways of God to man," but in order that the creature might understand the will of the Creator. The cross in baptism, the ring in marriage, the cap and surplice and official robes, the very Prayer Book itself, were but superstitions. They wanted the pure Word of God. Unfortunately for such guidance through the mazes of this troublesome world, the Bible is capable of many interpretations in accordance with the point of view of the reader, and the Puritans themselves were to split into many different sects. But, for good and ill, they were fated to play an enormous part in shaping the destinies not only of England but of that "new world called America." Fanatics there were among them, without doubt, but the majority were people of sincere conviction, to whom life was a serious business, not alone here and now, but as the preparation for a world to come.

The Presbyterians desired an entirely remodelled Church with another form of government. Bishops and priests were abhorrent to them, and presbyters and elders were to take

## *The Problem of the Age*

their place. The discipline was strict, and offending members could be called before a Presbytery for any offence in life or doctrine, to listen meekly to grave rebuke or the sentence of expulsion from the Church. The Presbytery, too, claimed the power of declaring the mind of God "in all questions of religion."

The Roman Catholics were the adherents of the faith that had grown up from earliest times through the Middle Ages, which they held unchanged and unchangeable. Their supreme earthly head was the Pope, who was infallible in his judgments. They revered and worshipped the Virgin as they did her Son, and they held that the bread and wine used in the service of the Mass were in some mystical way changed into the body and blood of Christ.

All parties looked to James I to do something for them. The hopes of the Presbyterians ran high, for he had been bred among them. This, however, was little recommendation to him, for he had grown heartily tired of their long dissertations and admonitions. The Roman Catholics looked to the son of Mary Stuart to allow them a larger measure of toleration; ultimately they hoped that Roman Catholicism would once more become the State religion—but the time was not yet ripe for it. James had promised them a certain amount of freedom,

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but no sooner had he ascended the throne than the laws against them were so rigorously enforced that the extremists formed the Gunpowder Plot. Its discovery led to far harsher laws against the Roman Catholics, and thenceforth they were obliged to receive the Mass in secret as though they were committing a crime.

The Puritans also hoped for many things from the new reign, as did the Arminians. The latter came off the better. 'No Bishop, no King,' came to be the motto of the House of Stuart. It was a case of mutual service: if the bishops preached the 'divine right,' the kings could not but support them.

The political and religious troubles were to lead to civil war, to the death of Charles I, to the Commonwealth, and to the Restoration.

## CHAPTER IV: *Preparation*

TO the old house at Huntingdon where he had been born and bred, Oliver now returned with his bride. His mother and his unmarried sisters still remained in residence, for two generations of an English family in the seventeenth century (like the French families in the nineteenth) often lived under one roof. If the young wife sighed at times for a home of her very own, she doubtless sighed in secret. Her husband and his mother were devoted to one another and it would have ill become her to have sown discord between them. And, besides, old Mistress Cromwell would not have been easy to tackle. To judge her character from her portrait, she was a woman of marked individuality, keen and firm, with a touch of shrewdness and humour. Her penetrating eyes probably noticed shortcomings in the town-bred daughter-in-law. Elizabeth at times yearned, no doubt, for her father's fine house on Tower Hill and the gay doings and the gossip of the great city. But since she was of an amiable and pleasant disposition she must soon have learned to adapt herself to her new position, to stifle an occasional yawn, to cease to compare Huntingdon unfavourably with the Metropolis, and to settle down.

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Fortunately women had little time for moping in those days, for, though the households were less self-sufficing than in the Middle Ages, still much was done at home that is now consigned to factory and workshop. A notable housewife would superintend baking, brewing, and dairy-work; her store-room and still-room would be objects of pride; her linen-cupboard would become a legend to future generations; her stitchery and her embroidery would be handed down as heirlooms. Cromwell's mother, however, was of a practical bent, and the story that he was the son of a brewer came from the fact that she not only brewed excellent ale for household consumption, but when her store was overfull she allowed her neighbours to be her customers.

The men-folk, too, were fully occupied, and Cromwell busied himself about his farm, ploughing and sowing, reaping, rearing cattle and sheep, and going to the neighbouring towns on market-days to sell his stock. But he had leisure to attend to local affairs and we get glimpses of him later as a champion of the rights of the poorer folk. To all outward appearance he too was settling down to lead the life of an active country gentleman, following in his father's footsteps, as a respected member of an old family.



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There was good reason that he should be active and industrious, for a little more than a year after his marriage his eldest child was born. He was christened Robert in St John's Church, Huntingdon, and some eighteen months later he had a baby brother, Oliver.

The experience of fatherhood deepened Cromwell's character. In his solitary walks by the banks of the sluggish river Ouse, when the day's work was done, he would brood over the problem of man's relation to his Maker. At times he fell into states of deep melancholy—such experiences are common with those who strive to solve for themselves the mysteries of life and death—and often at such times his anxious wife would send in haste for the doctor to prescribe for him. But there was little to be done for him, as his sickness was of the soul rather than of the body. Dr Simcox related that he was often sent for at midnight since Mr Cromwell was very 'splenetic' and thought that he was about to die. Cromwell also had fancies about the Town Cross. The Puritan influence of boyhood and manhood had sunk deep and he had little reverence and much distrust for such symbols of the faith.

The time of inward storm came to an end, and Cromwell found an anchorage for his troubled soul in an inalienable belief and trust

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in God, and in His message to man as unfolded in the Bible.

The sober life of the little Puritan household in Huntingdon was in strong contrast to the gay life of town. With them the Bible was the Book—the only one that mattered—and their language and forms of expression were founded on this magnificent model. In town 40,000 play-books were printed in a couple of years and were “more vendible than the choicest sermons.” The Puritans looked askance not only at plays, playwrights, and playgoers, but at the homely village fairs and dances, and the more fanatical of them forbade even the most harmless pleasures to the younger generation.

Five years after Cromwell's marriage the bells of Huntingdon, in common with the bells of all the parish churches of England, tolled the death of James I. His eldest surviving son, Charles, ascended the throne. The new reign held great promise, for the young prince, who was Cromwell's junior by but a year, had much in his favour. He was a marked contrast to his father, of dignified bearing, handsome and courteous, and to outward appearance ‘every inch a king.’ Mrs Hutchinson, whose memoirs of her husband throw light on the life of the time, tells us: “The face of the Court was much changed in



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the change of the King; for King Charles was temperate, chaste, and serious; so that the fools and bawds, mimics and catamites of the former Court grew out of fashion; and the nobility and courtiers, who did not quite abandon their debaucheries, had yet that reverence to the King to retire into corners to practise them: men of learning and ingenuity in all arts were in esteem, and received encouragement from the King, who was a most excellent judge and a great lover of paintings, carvings, gravings, and many other ingenuities."

But the joy-bells had hardly ceased ringing for the coronation before troubles began. Charles, much to the satisfaction of the country, had failed to secure the Infanta of Spain as his bride. He had married instead Henrietta Maria, the fifteen-year-old daughter of Henry IV of France—a Roman Catholic to the core. The little Puritan household would have had special opportunities for hearing all the latest news, for Cromwell's uncle, Sir Oliver, represented the county of Huntingdon in Parliament, and the fact that he had more than once entertained Royalty would have given him access to the Court circle. No doubt they were greatly perturbed at the thought of the Roman Catholic princess as Queen Consort of England—especially as the King had promised as part of the

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marriage agreement that the penal laws against the Catholics should not be enforced. Added to this, the young Queen not only brought over her own priests, but insisted that a chapel should be set apart for her worship. Charles, who always played a double game, was at a loss what to do: he did not want to irritate his Protestant subjects by unduly favouring the Roman Catholics, and yet he did not wish to break his promise to the King of France. Court gossip told of so much friction between the royal pair that they had decided to live apart. The Queen, no doubt, had in addition to other grievances, to complain of Charles's devotion to the Duke of Buckingham, who advised him in all matters. She was not alone in hating the Duke, for the country at large shared her distrust and made him the scapegoat of his master's earliest mistakes. The nation was only too willing to give the young King a chance if he would but get rid of his all-powerful favourite.

Sir Oliver Cromwell sat in the first two Parliaments of the reign—neither of them was a good augury of what was to come. The King wanted money not only for his personal expenses, but also to prosecute a war with Spain; Parliament wanted an assurance that the Protestant faith should be tampered with in no

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wise. The first Parliament was dismissed by the King in three months; the second, summoned six months later, was in an even less conciliatory mood. Charles wanted money to pay for the fleet at Plymouth, and to keep up the army and navy; Parliament wanted redress of grievances. Sir John Eliot, who was to play a notable part in the coming struggle, voiced the discontent of the country: "Our honour is ruined, our ships are sunk, our men perished, not by the enemy, not by chance but . . . by those we trust."

Who was to blame? The Duke of Buckingham.

"He has broken those nerves and sinews of our land, the stores and treasures of the King. There needs no search for it. It is too visible. His profuse expenses, his superfluous feasts, his magnificent buildings, his riots, his excesses, what are they but the visible evidences of an express exhausting of the State, a chronicle of the immensity of his waste of the revenues of the Crown?"

As a result of his outspokenness Eliot found himself in the Tower, but the attitude of Parliament was so menacing that he was soon set at liberty. The impeachment of Buckingham passed the House of Commons and the case was duly taken to the Lords. The Duke, richly

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clad and adorned with jewels, appeared in person and the insolence of his bearing was noted by all. He put his trust in princes and his royal master stood by him. The King refused to dismiss him and hastily dissolved Parliament.

This, satisfactory as it was to Buckingham, left Charles in greater financial difficulties than ever. His first experiment of requesting free gifts from his subjects was a disastrous failure, his second of demanding a forced loan had little better fortune. Among those who refused to pay we note the name of Oliver's cousin, the dauntless John Hampden, a young Buckinghamshire squire. "I could be content to lend but fear to draw upon myself the curse in Magna Charta, which should be read twice a year against those who infringe it." He was duly imprisoned for his fearlessness and such was the rigour of the treatment that though he lived to strike again he was never the same man.

Buckingham, whose position was far from secure, hoped to dazzle the country by success in arms, and with this in view he bethought himself of the besieged Protestants in Rochelle, and persuaded his master to place him at the head of an expedition of 10,000 men to go to their relief. The total and hopeless failure of this undertaking only complicated the King's

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difficulties, and he was forced once more to summon a Parliament.

While all these momentous happenings were going on in the country at large the Cromwells had their share of the ups and downs of life in quiet Huntingdonshire. Sir Oliver was in great difficulties: he had lived far beyond his income and was obliged to sell the old family mansion at Hinchinbrook. He removed to Ramsey Mere, where he lived in diminished state on the remnants of his substance, retired from public life.

To outward eyes the fortunes of the family were at the ebb when Oliver Cromwell sought the suffrages of the townsfolk of Huntingdon and was duly elected to represent them in the third Parliament of the reign of Charles I.

## CHAPTER V: *Cromwell enters Public Life*

CROMWELL bade farewell to his wife and children and rode off to London. Though the journey was only some sixty miles it was something of an undertaking since roads were often bad. It was no uncommon thing for a coach to stick fast in the mire and for travellers to bear with what patience they might long hours of delay before it could be extricated.

Once in town Cromwell's eye must have noted the changes that had taken place since his last visit, and he would probably have set about securing a lodging somewhere in the neighbourhood of Westminster. No doubt his cousin, John Hampden, who though but five years his senior was now an old Parliamentary hand, counselled and advised him.

It was no new scene for Cromwell. He must often have walked to the Abbey in his law-student days, and perhaps attended the Church of St Margaret nestling in its shadow—just as it stands to-day.

His glance would have rested with quickened interest on the beautiful Gothic building that then housed the Commons. In pre-Reformation



## *Cromwell enters Public Life*

days it had been a chapel, the lower chamber dedicated to St Mary of the Vaults, the upper, where the House sat, to St Stephen. The House of Lords had their meeting-place in the adjoining ancient Court of Requests. These buildings were used by England's legislators until the disastrous fire of 1834 burnt them to the ground. But Westminster Hall still stands as it stood in Richard II's day.

What were Cromwell's thoughts as he took his seat for the first time in the House, as a chosen representative of the people? It was a moment, in spite of future glories and triumphs, never to be forgotten. His keen eye noted the Speaker's chair with its rich gilding, the table for the Clerks of the House, the green-covered seats for the members rising in tiers on either side, with the galleries for strangers up above. This was but the body of the House—its soul was in the men who sat there. What giants there were in those days! Sir John Eliot, the noble patriot; Pym, the keen Parliamentary leader; Chief Justice Coke, deeply versed in law; Wentworth, now on the side of the Parliament, later as the Earl of Strafford to become the King's most trusted adviser.

How did the new representative for Huntingdon strike his fellow-members? He was a plain countryman, lacking many of the charms of

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manner and person that graced the courtly gentlemen of town.

Parliament met on March 17, 1628, once more to grapple with the old problem—how to make the grant of supplies to the King dependent on the redress of grievances. Eliot spoke in no measured tones of the country's danger:

“Upon this dispute not only our goods and land are engaged, but all that we call ours. Those rights, those privileges that made our fathers freemen are in question. If they be not now the more carefully preserved, they will render us to our posterity less free, less worthy than our fathers.” Wentworth was fired by the same spirit when he declared: “We must vindicate our ancient liberties, we must reinforce the laws made by our ancestors. We must set such a stamp upon them as no licentious spirit shall dare hereafter to invade them.”

With this purpose in view the House drew up the Petition of Right, in which was clearly set forth the right of Parliament to control taxation: “No man hereafter,” it declared, “is to be compelled to make or yield any gift, loan, benevolence, tax, or such-like charge, without common consent by Act of Parliament.” This was a direct blow at the King's prerogative, and he hesitated to sign it. It was only when



## *Cromwell enters Public Life*

confronted with the fear that Buckingham's name as "the author and source of all these miseries" would be inserted in the Remonstrance that Parliament was drawing up on the state of the realm that he gave way.

And what of Buckingham? Anxious that he should retrieve his position by success in arms, the King put him once more at the head of an expedition to go to the relief of Rochelle. He was at Portsmouth, waiting to embark, when a man from among the crowd that pressed round him—a stern-faced young Puritan lieutenant—swiftly drew out a hunting-knife and stabbed him to the heart. A few hours later the tidings reached the King. He threw himself upon his bed in an agony of grief which was intensified by the knowledge that, outside the palace, shouts of exultation greeted the deed. Crowds lined the streets and praised and blessed the murderer as he passed on his way to his doom. Cromwell was not among the motley mob of townsfolk and apprentices, for Parliament was not then sitting and he had returned home. The populace that had lit their bonfires and rung their bells with glee at the passing of the Petition of Right, now rejoiced that the King's evil counselor was for ever removed from his side. Surely now all would be well with the country!

But from this time forward another counsellor,

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no less self-seeking, was to have a baneful influence on the King—his consort, Queen Henrietta Maria. She was, as we have already said, a true daughter of the Roman Catholic Church and zealous for her faith. Men and women grew to fear that the Protestant religion would be undermined by Popish practices, for Charles I was a High Churchman both by conviction and by temperament. The forms and ceremonies of worship were all-important to him, and the symbolic beauty of the services and the liturgy had a special appeal. Charles promoted to the highest office the clergy who held similar views to his own, and they used their position to harass the Puritan preachers.

It was determined to thrash the matter out in Parliament, and when the members met again after the recess Eliot sounded the trumpet-call: "The Gospel is that truth in which the country has been happy through long and rare prosperity. This ground therefore let us lay for a foundation of our building, that that Truth, not with words but with actions, we will maintain."

It was in this connexion that Cromwell made his maiden speech in the House. A certain Dr Alabaster had been preaching 'flat Popery' at St Paul's Cross, and Dr Beard, Cromwell's old schoolmaster, had been informed by his

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bishop, Dr Neile, that such doctrine was to be accepted. The stern old pedagogue paid no heed to this admonition, boldly preached against Dr Alabaster, and was reprimanded—so the member for Huntingdon informed the House. There is still extant the first mention of Cromwell's name in Parliamentary annals:

“Upon question, *Ordered* That Dr Beard of Huntingdon be written to by Mr Speaker, to come up and testify against the Bishop; the order for Dr Beard to be delivered to Mr Cromwell.”

The King now played his trump card—he determined to dissolve Parliament. A fortnight later Speaker Finch informed the House that he had an order to adjourn. One or two of the younger members rushed at him, seized him, and held him down in the chair; the doors were locked, and none heeded the knocking of the King's usher without. “Let him go! Let him go! Let Mr Speaker go!”

“No, God's wounds!” they replied, “he shall sit there till it pleases the House to rise.”

In this scene of uproar Eliot managed to put three resolutions: for the preservation of the Protestant faith, for Parliamentary control of taxation, and a ban on any who willingly paid taxes other than those levied by Parliament. The resolutions were passed with acclamation

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and among the shouts of assent Cromwell's "Aye! Aye!" rang clear.

Never again was the House to echo to the eloquence of Eliot. Charles, in his deep indignation at the defiance shown that day, sent him to the Tower, and before another Parliament was summoned he was dead.

## CHAPTER VI: *Quiet Years*

**A**MID such stirring scenes Cromwell's apprenticeship to politics was served. The eleven years to follow, during which Charles ruled without a Parliament, were years of preparation for that future in which he was to be the man of destiny.

He returned to Huntingdon, where there was now a little brood of children to welcome him, for Robert and Oliver had been followed as the years went on by Bridget, Richard, Henry, and Elizabeth, the baby at the time. His wife had her hands full with her domestic ties, and, so far as we know, they were her sole preoccupation. Unlike many of the seventeenth-century dames, she does not appear to have taken much heed of the big issues that were agitating the country. Her husband, meanwhile, though absorbed in his business, kept a watchful eye on local affairs. A new charter was granted to Huntingdon in July 1630, and he was named a Justice of the Peace. Henceforth the town was to be governed by a mayor and twelve aldermen appointed for life. Cromwell saw in this a danger to the rights of the poorer inhabitants, and he spoke with such vehemence and uncontrolled anger on this point that the mayor and

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aldermen complained to the Privy Council and he was sent in custody to London. The charges against him were heard by the Duke of Manchester, and the matter was peaceably settled by Cromwell's frank acknowledgment that he had spoken in the heat of passion and by his expressed desire that what he had said might be forgotten.

Cromwell returned home to resume his ordinary life, but the dispute had left a sting behind it and the townsfolk were now less cordial toward their one-time member. It was no doubt partly on this account and partly because of his increasing family that he meditated a momentous step. What long talks there must have been in the family circle before he finally decided to sell his property at Huntingdon for £1800 and move to St Ives, five miles farther down the Ouse, where he rented good grazing land!

St Ives was little more than a village, with a row of houses fronting the river and the dignity of a cattle-market for local trade. Here Cromwell used to come on market-days to sell his stock and to discuss with neighbouring farmers the state of the crops and the state of the kingdom. He attended the parish church regularly with his wife and elder children, and as in that marshy country he was subject to colds and sore throats, and he was also indifferent to his





HE WAS SENT IN CUSTODY TO LONDON





## *Quiet Years*

personal appearance, he might be seen at times with his neck swathed in red flannel. Religion was not only a matter of Sundays with him; on weekdays he would gather his labourers and children round him, read the Bible to them and pray with them.

At all times, and especially in the long winter evenings, he read and re-read the Bible, until its phraseology became his familiar speech; so much did this become a habit that at times to modern ears, accustomed to greater reticence in matters of faith, it seems tinged with hypocrisy. But it was not so. It is difficult for us to-day with our easy access to public libraries and cheap editions of the classics to understand how in many a Puritan household the Bible was the one and only book of literature and religion. The Cromwell family Bible, which can be seen in the London Museum, is not the glorious authorized version, but the Geneva Bible, a translation made by English exiles in Geneva, and used in English households in Elizabeth's day. But Cromwell must have gone too far for inspiration to the authorized version, one of the great monuments of our literature, which was completed in the reign of James I, since, as we have already said, his master at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, was one of the translators. The Bible was in truth a lantern to Cromwell's

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feet and a light to his path, and his mind was saturated with its message.

In spite of the hostility of the bishops, the Puritans still contrived to retain the services of lecturers. The first letter of Cromwell's which has been preserved deals with this matter. It is dated from St Ives and was written to a certain Mr Storie, at the Sign of the Dog, in the Royal Exchange, London. He begs his correspondent not to withdraw a lecturer's pay, for "it were a piteous thing to see a lecture fall, in the hands of so many able and godly men as I am persuaded the founders of this are; in these times wherein we see they are suppressed with too much haste and violence by the enemies of God his Truth."

At the time this letter was written, Cromwell's uncle, Sir Thomas Steward, lay dying at Ely, and on January 30, 1636, he was buried in the cathedral. Cromwell was his heir and inherited the glebe house "and the goodwill to the farming of the tithes under the chapter."

To that house hard by St Mary's Church (it was still standing in 1845) the family moved in the middle of the year. It was a low, two-storied building, with irregular gables, and was unpretentious without and within. Cromwell's mother and unmarried sisters, who had remained at Huntingdon during his residence at St Ives,

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now rejoined him. The house can have been none too big for them all. His seventh child had been born at St Ives, but had died the day after his baptism, and two daughters, Mary and Frances, who were born at Ely, now completed the family.

The first break of parting came when the two elder boys were sent off to school at Felstead, a place which was doubtless chosen because it was near their grandfather's home. There they could forget their home-sickness on half-holiday visits. When Robert was of an age to leave he caught the smallpox and died at school. He was a lad of promise very near to his father's heart. "Now Robert was a youth of singular piety, fearing God more than ordinary"—so runs in Latin the record of his death in the parish register. Years afterward, when the father himself lay dying, his mind reverted to the agony of that bereavement.

The sorrowing man returned to his work. If at times a great weariness of the soul came upon him he did not allow it to sap his industry. At Ely no less than at St Ives and Huntingdon, as occasion served, he championed the rights of the poor. Thus, when a useful scheme for the drainage of the fens was proposed he did his best to put a stop to it, as he feared it would encroach on the grazing rights of the people.

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The country folk looked to him for assistance in these troubles, and he came to be nicknamed the "Lord of the Fens." The time was now at hand when he was to have an ampler field for the exercise of his gifts, and to show what manner of man the stern farmer of Ely had grown to be in the eleven years since he had sat in Parliament.

## CHAPTER VII: *King Charles sows the Wind*

PARLIAMENTS are altogether in my power for their calling, sitting, and dissolution, therefore as I find the fruits of them good or evil, they are to continue or not to be."

The King had spoken. During the eleven years in which Cromwell was employed raising crops in the Fen country, Charles was sowing another kind of grain that was to ripen for the dread harvest of Civil War.

The royal exchequer was empty. Parliament was not sitting to vote supplies, grudgingly, with various unpleasant conditions attached to them—what, therefore, was the King to do? An ingenious device occurred to him: he looked up ancient statutes that were more honoured in the breach than in the observance and put them into force once more. Cromwell was among the unlucky country gentlemen who, having an estate worth over £40 and having neglected to take up his knighthood, was fined £10. A 'Commission of Forests' was also helpful in defining the exact extent of the Crown lands and in imposing heavy fines on landowners whose ancestors had encroached

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upon them. Now came the turn of the city folk. The little London of that day was overcrowded, and a movement to the suburbs—suburbs that are now in the very heart of the great metropolis—had begun. A royal proclamation forbade the building of houses outside a certain radius, and builders who neglected to observe it had to pay for their disobedience. Town and country folk alike were hit by another device—the revival of ‘monopolies’—which had been abolished by an Act of Parliament in the reign of James I. They resembled in some way the gigantic trusts and combines of to-day, since the customer could not go to a rival firm if goods were too dear. He either had to buy his soap and salt and other indispensable articles from the monopolist, who could charge as much as he liked, or go without them altogether.

Nearly every one was beginning to feel the pinch of poverty. The King grew unpopular. Could he have read the signs of the times he would have found an ominous warning in the ever-increasing number of people who sought new lands for old and emigrated to America.

The Star Chamber, which in its earlier day was useful as a check on powerful nobles who could not otherwise be brought to justice, Charles now used for the purpose of extorting



## *King Charles sows the Wind*

money from his subjects who failed to comply with the royal will. It also had the power of inflicting cruel punishments.

Cromwell at St Ives must often have discussed the terrible penalty meted out to William Prynne, a young barrister of fanatically Puritan convictions. To him playhouses were haunts of the evil one, and players and playgoers were alike doomed to perdition. Unfortunately for himself, he felt it his solemn duty to inform them of their peril. Since the Queen often went to the theatre, the volume was considered to be an attack on her. Prynne was brought before the Star Chamber, sentenced to stand twice in the pillory, have both his ears cut off, and be imprisoned for life.

Nor was he the only victim; other Puritan pamphleteers shared a like, if not a worse, fate. Thus John Lilburn, for publishing 'seditious libels,' was heavily fined, condemned to stand in the pillory, and was whipped at the cart's tail from the Fleet Prison to the gate of Westminster Hall. The worst sentence of all was passed upon Dr Leighton. He could hardly have hoped to escape the rigours of a Star Chamber sentence, since in his pamphlet, *An Appeal to the Parliament*, he had the audacity to call the bishops "Men of Blood, Ravens, and Magpies that prey upon the State,



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and His Majesty's Royal Consort, our gracious Queen, the Daughter of Heth." For this, together with his commendation of the murderer of the Duke of Buckingham, after being degraded of his ministry, "he shall for further punishment and example to others be brought to the pillory at Westminster and there whipped, and after his whipping be set upon the pillory for some convenient space, and have one of his ears cut off, and his nose slit, and be branded in the face with a double SS, for a sower of sedition, and shall then be carried to the Prison of the Fleet and at some other convenient time afterwards shall be carried into the pillory at Cheapside, upon a Market Day, and there be likewise whipt and then be set upon the pillory, and have his other ear cut off, and from thence be carried back to the prison of the Fleet, there to remain during life, unless His Majesty be graciously pleased to enlarge him." The wretched man succeeded in making his escape, and there was a hue and cry after him. He was caught in Bedfordshire and the sentence was duly executed. Would anybody with the slightest grain of humanity be a party to catching such a malefactor now to undergo such a sentence?

Apart from the ever-increasing influence of the Queen, Charles's main counsellors were Sir

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Thomas Wentworth and Archbishop Laud. The former, as we have seen, had first come into prominence as a champion of the rights of Parliament, but when it came to choosing between King and Commons, he threw in his lot unreservedly with the monarch. He was a man of ability with a power of command. He now concentrated the whole force of his gloomy nature on one object—the establishment in England of a despotism as rigorous as the one which his contemporary, Cardinal Richelieu, had established in France. To this policy, which was “to vindicate the Monarchy for ever from the conditions and restraints of subjects,” he gave the name of ‘Thorough.’ In 1628 he was created President of the Council of the North and in 1632 Lord Deputy of Ireland.

Laud, his colleague in the royal counsels, was a sincere man, of limited intelligence, superstitious and narrow-minded. He, Clarendon says, courted “persons too little, nor cared to make his design and purposes appear as candid as they were, by showing them in any other dress than their own natural beauty and roughness; and did not consider enough what men said or were like to say.” Like his royal master he loved the forms and ceremonies of church worship, splendid vestments, richly adorned churches, and the beautiful English liturgy.

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But though it was not his intention, as the Puritans feared, to place the country once more under the yoke of the Papacy, it was his intention to suppress Puritanism with the utmost rigour.

Wentworth and Laud were alike in their hatred of opposition and in their inability to understand or appreciate other points of view; consequently they were unsuitable counsellors in a country germinating with new ideas and challenging accepted beliefs.

Popular discontent was fanned into flame when in 1635 the King attempted to levy Ship-Money (an impost exacted in time of war from the maritime provinces) in time of peace from the inland counties. Charles condescended to explain his reasons to his indignant subjects: "We are given to understand that certain thieves, pirates, and robbers of the sea as well as Turks, enemies of the Christian name as others, have spoiled and molested the shipping and merchandise of our own subjects and those of friendly powers." The judges were on the King's side, since they informed him that "Your Majesty is the sole judge both of the danger and when and how the same is to be prevented and avoided." But he had gone too far. London protested, and many private individuals refused to pay; among

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them was John Hampden. Proceedings were taken against him and the trial opened on November 6, 1637. Oliver's cousin, "Mr St John, a dark tough man of the toughness of leather, spake with irrefragable law eloquence, law logic, for three days running on Mr Hampden's side." Hampden, though he lost his case, won the gratitude of the oppressed nation.

Not content with sowing dissension in England, Charles, still with the best intentions, proceeded to alienate Scotland. The Scottish people, deeply influenced by the doctrines of Calvin, had accepted the Reformation far more completely than the English. There the Presbyterian system of Church government was accepted. Charles now determined to bring the Scottish Church into complete uniformity with the English, and ordered that the Book of Common Prayer should be used in all the churches. When on Sunday, July 23, 1637, an attempt was made to read it in St Giles's Cathedral, Edinburgh, a militant of the period, Jenny Geddes by name, threw a stool at the preacher's head. The act was symbolic of the attitude of the nation. The following year, in the churchyard of the Greyfriars at Edinburgh, a 'Covenant with God' was signed amid scenes of wild enthusiasm: "We promise and swear by the great name of the Lord our God, to

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continue in the profession and obedience of the said religion, and that we shall defend the same, and resist all their contrary errors and corruptions, according to our vocation and the utmost of that power which God has put into our hands all the days of our life." 'Deeds, not words,' was the intention of these men, and armed Covenanters now marched south.

Great Britain was seething with discontent when in 1639 the King summoned Wentworth from Ireland to consult with him about what was to be done. Early in 1640 he was raised to the peerage as Earl of Strafford. On his advice a new Parliament was summoned to meet on April 13, 1640. To it Oliver Cromwell was returned as member for Cambridge.

The eleven years of despotism had taught the King nothing of the temper of the country. The breach had widened between him and the Commons. He needed immediate supplies and he promised that if these were granted he would later on consider the question of grievances. The House wanted an assurance that Ship-Money and other illegal taxation should be abolished before they voted a penny for the royal exchequer. Charles, after a sitting of twenty-three days, dissolved the Short Parliament (as it was afterward called) in anger. He had not, however, dashed the hopes of

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ardent reformers. "Things must be worse before they could be better," Cromwell's cousin, St John, observed.

The King was getting deeper and deeper into difficulties. The Covenanters had routed his troops in the north. Now he was resolved, cost what it might, to reduce the northern kingdom to submission. There was nothing for it but to summon a Parliament, and this was destined to be the last one of his reign.



## CHAPTER VIII: *The Long Parliament*

CROMWELL, re-elected member for Cambridge, took his seat in the Parliament which met on November 3, 1640. He was no longer an obscure country member, but a mature man of forty-one with Parliamentary experience. A few days later he presented the petition of John Lilburn, one of the victims of Star Chamber injustice. His appearance at this time was noted by Sir Philip Warwick, who was present: "The first time I ever took notice of Mr Cromwell was in the very beginning of the Parliament held in November 1640, when I vainly thought myself a courtly young gentleman—for we courtiers valued ourselves much upon our good clothes! I came into the House one morning well clad and perceived a gentleman speaking, whom I knew not—very ordinarily apparelled; for it was a plain cloth suit, which seemed to have been made by an ill country tailor; his linen was plain, and not very clean; and I remember a speck or two of blood upon his little band, which was not much larger than his collar. His hat was without a hatband. His stature was of a good size; his sword stuck close to his side: his countenance



## *The Long Parliament*

swollen and reddish, his voice sharp and untunable, and his eloquence full of fervour."

Lilburn's petition was practically ignored because of the preoccupation of the House with the King's ministers. Strafford was the first to come up for trial, for he and his policy of 'Thorough' were considered responsible for much of the King's misgovernment. The impeachment passed both Lords and Commons, and Strafford's trial commenced on March 22, 1641. Cromwell, though he took no special part in it, was as a member of the House of Commons among his accusers. The Puritan member for Cambridge must have looked sombre enough among the crowd that thronged the hall with "the most glorious assembly the isle could afford." The King was present watching the proceedings with an aching heart, and the Queen had thought fit to bring two of their children to see the Earl in his hour of agony. To many present the trial was but a day's pleasuring, and in the intervals the hall was turned into a picnicking ground, with "much public eating not only of confections but of flesh and bread," and "bottles of beer and wine going thick from mouth to mouth without cups."

Strafford defended himself so ably that his accusers, fearing to lose their case, dropped the impeachment and brought in a Bill of Attainder,

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which passed through Lords and Commons. It required but one signature. Would the King desert his minister in his hour of need? For two days he was torn by indecision, and then signed the death-warrant. "Put not your trust in Princes," cried Strafford, when he knew that his doom was sealed. Archbishop Laud, who was not permitted to give him the last consolations of the Church, looking out of the window of his prison in the Tower, blessed him as he passed to the scaffold. Strafford was Roman in his bearing. "I thank God I am no more afraid of death," he said, "but as cheerfully put off my doublet at this time as ever I did when I went to bed."

The surging populace roared their delight at his execution. "His head is off! His head is off!" they shouted in triumph as they lit their bonfires and rang their bells in an orgy of rejoicing.

As yet only a spectator in these dramatic scenes, Cromwell was rapidly gaining Parliamentary experience, and sat on no less than eighteen committees called to consider the petitions and grievances from boroughs and councils. Every now and again his fiery temper got the better of him and he would insult the witnesses. But his eloquence was beginning to make an impression on the House. A



FOR TWO DAYS HE WAS TORN BY INDECISION, AND THEN  
SIGNED



## *The Long Parliament*

contemporary says that he spoke "with a strong and masculine excellence, more able to persuade than to be persuaded. His expressions were hardy, opinions resolute, asseverations grave and vehement, always intermixed (Andronicus-like) with sentences of Scripture, to give them the greater weight, and the better to insinuate into the affections of the people. He expressed himself with some kind of passion, but with such a commanding wise deportment till, at his pleasure, he governed and swayed the House, and he had most time the leading voice. Those who find no such wonder in his speeches may find it in the effect of them."

He was on the committee which debated the Triennial Bill, which passed both Houses and was reluctantly signed by the King. By it a Parliament had to be called every three years. This was but one of the checks on absolute monarchy. The Star Chamber and other arbitrary courts were abolished, and Ship-Money was declared illegal. The Tonnage and Poundage Act forbade the levying of any charge upon exports or imports without consent of Parliament.

Cromwell, who had been known in the Fen country as 'a speaker for sectaries,' came more prominently forward in the ecclesiastical discussions. He was among those who wished to

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abolish episcopacy 'root and branch'—bishops, Prayer Book and all. On this question of the religious reform there was a serious split in the popular party, and Lord Falkland and Hyde, afterward Lord Clarendon, the Royalist historian of this epoch, went over to the King's side.

The monarch had been compelled to set the royal seal to these distasteful measures, but he had no intention of being a pawn in the hands of Parliament. He departed for Scotland, anxious now to propitiate his subjects there.

News of more grave import came from Ireland. The Irish people, Roman Catholics as we know, left to their own devices when Strafford's iron hand had been removed, had broken into revolt against the English Protestant settlers in Ulster. Terrible reports were in circulation as to the thousands that had been massacred there and the nameless atrocities that had been committed. When the tidings reached the House, "there was deep silence and a kind of consternation." Rumour was rife, stating that the Irish had a commission signed by the King; as a matter of fact they actually held a forged commission. Still this served to increase his unpopularity, especially when his cold comment on the situation became known: "I hope this ill news in Ireland may hinder some of these follies in England."



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The reform party now prepared a Grand Remonstrance, and in November 1641, Pym placed it before the Commons. In it were detailed the work that had been accomplished, the difficulties that had been surmounted, and the new dangers which had to be faced. Pym's hold on his party had slackened, for many men had changed sides. A fierce discussion took place and there was a scene of tumult in the House. Members lost control of themselves, waved their hats and unsheathed their swords, until it seemed as if the verbal warfare would end in actual strife. After a debate of sixteen hours the Remonstrance was carried by the narrow majority of eleven. As the chimes of St Margaret's were striking two the members passed out on their homeward way. Cromwell, walking down the stairs with Lord Falkland, emphasized his view of the momentousness of the issue. "If the Remonstrance had been rejected," he declared, "I would have sold all I had the next morning, and never have seen England any more; and I know there are many other honest men of this same resolution."

Charles now decided to play a trump card and to arrest as traitors the five Parliamentary ringleaders, Pym, Hampden, Holles, Haselrig, and Strode. As yet Cromwell had not come sufficiently forward to be under the royal ban.



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On January 4, 1642, the King rode down to the House with a rabble of four hundred Royalists at his heels. Parliament was sitting when the news that he was on his way thither spread like wildfire from bench to bench. The five members, warned in time, were hurried into a boat and rowed to the city. The King, leaving his retinue in Westminster Hall, crossed the threshold of the House, uncovered his head, and demanded the surrender of the offenders.

"I have neither eyes to see, nor tongue to speak in this place but as this House is pleased to direct me," replied the Speaker to the demand to produce the culprits.

"Well, well, I think my eyes are as good as another's," answered the King as he surveyed the House; "I see all the birds are flown. I do expect you will send them to me as soon as they return hither."

He left the House in a passion, to be received by the waiting mob outside with cries of "Privilege! Privilege!"

The last seed of his misgovernment had been sown and the crop was now ripe for Civil War. A peaceful settlement was impossible. The Queen crossed the Channel to seek aid from abroad, taking with her the Crown jewels. The King left Whitehall for Hampton Court, never to return until his hour of doom.

## CHAPTER IX: *Civil War*

THE day after the King's departure the five members returned in triumph, and the House set to work at once to inquire into the 'state of the kingdom.' The next few months were occupied with fruitless negotiations between King and Parliament. The King was swayed by a double policy—that of the Queen, who advocated resort to arms, and that of the far shrewder Hyde, who saw that the Commons, no less than the King, were bound by law. Hence, he advised his royal master to accede in all demands made upon him that were sanctioned by law, and to refuse, if convenient, every claim that was contrary to 'the known laws of the land.' This policy won him many adherents among people of moderate views, since it made him, and not the Commons, the advocate of the "ancient, equal, happy, well-poised, and never enough commended constitution."

But it did not stave off war. The King, though vacillating in judgment, was at times trenchant in his replies to demands that were infringements of his royal prerogative. "By God, not for an hour! You have asked that of me in this was never asked of a king, and with

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which I will not trust my wife and children"—so he answered when asked to surrender the control of the Militia.

The Queen, as we have seen, went abroad to seek foreign alliances. As a safe landing-place for foreign troops Charles decided to obtain possession of Hull. When on April 23, 1642, he approached the town with a company of three hundred horsemen, an unwonted sight met his eyes—the drawbridge was up, and the governor, Sir John Hotham, stood on the wall and refused him admittance. There was nothing for it but to brand him as a traitor and ride away. This act of defiance was the actual beginning of hostilities.

For the next few months both sides were making active preparations for war, and Cromwell was one of the most assiduous in its organization. On July 15 he obtained the permission of Parliament to allow the townsmen of Cambridge to raise two companies of volunteers, and he sent down arms for the defence of the town. On August 15 he was on the spot himself, seized the castle, and prevented the University plate, worth some £20,000, from being carried off.

A little over a month later, on August 22, Charles raised the royal standard on the castle rock at Nottingham. As it blew free over the

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motley crowd of soldiers, courtiers, and on-lookers, cheers rent the air for the Royalist cause. "God save King Charles and hang up the Roundheads!" cried the spectators. (Roundheads was the nickname bestowed on the close-cropped Puritans, who started the present fashion for men of wearing the hair short.) But the hearts of the crowd were heavy within them. The beat of drum and the blare of trumpet did not drown their inward misgiving. Rain drenched the royal banner as if the cause were bathed in tears, storm wrenched it from its bearings, and it fell to the ground. "An ill omen!" whispered one to another. The elders among them recalled that day some sixteen years before when the King had been crowned. Had he not worn white, the emblem of innocence, rather than the royal purple? Had not the preacher appointed for the occasion chosen for his text, "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life"?—an inauspicious message for one who stood on the threshold, not of a new life, but of a new reign!

The more strenuous of the King's followers soon put aside these forebodings. All must be ready for active service. His two nephews, Prince Rupert and Prince Maurice, both held high command; the former, a gallant young man of two and twenty, was appointed general

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of the horse. Some ten thousand men had flocked to the royal banner.

The Parliamentary army, under the Earl of Essex, Commander of the Forces, had chosen Northampton as the rallying-point. Hither came about 14,000 men, and 6000 more were reckoned among their numbers, thus making their available force double that of the King's. But at the outset at least the Royalists had the superiority in discipline and experience, and to outward eye all the bravery and show were on their side. The gallant Cavaliers, the Lords and gentlemen who formed the King's Life-guards, wore plumed casques over their flowing locks, embroidered collars over their glittering cuirasses, gay scarfs, golden swords, and belts. The Guards of the Earl of Essex wore buff leather coats and breeches—later the uniform of the whole Parliamentary army; Hampden's men were clad in green, and the London trained bands in scarlet.

Though, for our present purpose, we can think of England at this time only as in two different camps—Royalist and Roundhead—still, as a matter of fact, no small number of people sat on the fence to await events. In order to be on the safe side men would send one son to fight for the Parliament, another for the King. Some of the nobility, according to

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Clarendon, were entirely self-seeking: "Pembroke and Salisbury had rather the King and his posterity should be destroyed than that Wilton should be taken from one and Hatfield the other." Houses were divided and brother fought against brother, father against son. And though the name of Cromwell was destined for ever to be associated with this great upheaval, the head of his house, Sir Oliver, and other of his kinsmen were ardent Royalists. Speaking generally, we may say that the flower of the nobility, the larger landowners, and a good proportion of wealthy tradesmen were for the Crown, while peers of lesser degree, the smaller gentry, and the bulk of the merchants and traders were for Parliament. This, and the geographical grouping — the North and West for the King, the Eastern and home counties and most of the manufacturing towns, including the City of London, for Parliament — is subject to modification, since many changed sides according to the fortune of war.

The Parliamentary party had the whip-hand in respect to the command of money. In spite of the heroic sacrifices of his followers, who melted down their plate and sold their jewels to fill his exchequer, the King still suffered from chronic lack of supplies.

Before turning our attention to the campaign



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it is as well to say a few words about the methods of warfare in the seventeenth century. The discovery of gunpowder some three centuries before and the invention of firearms had revolutionized the art of war. *Cap-à-pie* armour had long disappeared from the battle-field, since, apart from its terrible weight, plate-armour was not proof against bullets. But, as we can see in portraits of the period, helmet and breastplate were still worn. Yet, since the firearms of those days were clumsy and difficult to load, too much reliance was not placed on the musketeers, and the pikemen had a full share of the work in a charge at close quarters. The foot-soldiers had to yield pride of place to the cavalry, armed with sword and pistol, for to them throughout the Civil War fell the largest share of the honours of victory.

Charles's plan of campaign was to march on London, and Essex determined to intercept him on the road. The rival forces met at Edgehill in Warwickshire, where, on Sunday afternoon, October 23, the first battle was fought. Cromwell received his baptism of fire that day, and was honourably mentioned as having remained with his troop and fought to the finish. Indeed, his valour and that of other leaders of the Parliamentary army turned what might have been a Royalist





PRINCE RUPERT AT EDGEHILL



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victory into an indecisive encounter in which both parties claimed the honours. The practical advantages were, however, on the side of the King, who marched South, captured Banbury and reached Oxford, where, since London remained hostile, he fixed his head-quarters.

Cromwell had not missed the lesson of Edgehill. "Why was it that the Roundheads had not given a better account of themselves?" he asked. It was about this time that he had a conversation with Hampden that was to have momentous consequences, and in after years he himself spoke of that interview:

"I was a person who, from my first employment, was suddenly preferred and lifted up from lesser trusts to greater; from my first being a captain of a troop of horse. . . . I had a very worthy friend then; and he was a very noble person, and I know his memory is very grateful to all—Mr John Hampden. At my first going out into this engagement, I saw our men were beaten at every hand. . . . 'Your troops,' said I, 'are most of them old decayed serving men, and tapsters, and such kind of fellows; and,' said I, 'their troops are gentlemen's sons, younger sons, and persons of quality: do you think that the spirits of such base mean fellows will ever be able to encounter gentlemen, that have honour and courage and resolution

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in them?’ Truly did I represent to him in this manner conscientiously; and truly I did tell him: ‘You must get men of a spirit: and take it not ill what I say, I know you will not—of a spirit that is likely to go on as far as gentlemen will go: or else you will be beaten still.’ I told him so; I did truly. He was a wise and worthy person; and he did think that I talked a good notion, but an impracticable one.”

Cromwell’s own training in military matters was almost wholly in practical experience, but some of his biographers assert that he availed himself of the instruction of Captain Dalbier, which stood him in good stead when he set to work to raise and to drill into efficient soldiers “such men as had the fear of God before them, as made some conscience of what they did—men who are religious and godly.”

The year 1642 wore to its close with no chance of settlement on either side, and the balance of advantage was on the side of the King. Early in January 1643, Cromwell was in the Eastern counties recruiting for the New Model Army.

## CHAPTER X: *The Triumph of the Ironsides*

**D**URING the first few months of 1643 Cromwell was working for the realization of his dream. He was wise in his selection of men; character was the test. He was, as we know, a Puritan, but that name covered as many different varieties of faith as the word Dissenter does to-day. There were many sects—Cromwell himself was an Independent—but he was tolerant to all within the Puritan fold. Other leaders were less broad-minded, and when Major-General Crawford dismissed one of his captains for being an Anabaptist, Cromwell wrote to him in indignation: “The State in choosing men to serve it takes no notice of their opinions; if they be willing faithfully to serve it, that satisfies.” He was also convinced that, though good birth was not without its advantages, other considerations were far more important. “I had rather,” he declared, “have a plain russet-coated captain that knows what he fights for and loves what he knows, than that which you call ‘a gentleman,’ and is nothing else. I honour a gentleman that is so indeed. . . . It may be it provokes some spirits to see such plain men

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made captains of horse. It had been well that men of honour and birth had entered into these employments—but why do they not appear? But seeing it was necessary the work must go on, better plain men than none.”

At the opening of the Civil War certain counties had banded together and pooled their resources for mutual defence. Thus Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Cambridge, Hertfordshire, and later on Huntingdonshire and Lincolnshire, formed one group—the most famous of all—known as the Eastern Association, with Cambridge as its headquarters and Cromwell as the leading spirit.

From these counties he recruited ‘a lovely company’—in all ten troops of soldiers, who were later to earn by their intrepidity in the field the honourable title of Ironsides. The discipline was strict; no plunder was allowed, swearing was punished by a fine of twelve pence, and drunkenness by the stocks.

In four months this trained band was ready for active service, with their leader, now Colonel Cromwell, in supreme command for the first time. He was reinforced by other soldiers inferior in character and training. He had been ordered to relieve Lincolnshire, for Newark on the borders was a Royalist stronghold, and a Parliamentary force was besieged in

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Gainsborough. His ultimate object was to go North and join Lord Fairfax, who was holding his own against the Earl of Newcastle with head-quarters at Hull.

Cromwell encountered the Royalist contingent at Grantham, near Newark, and he gave a good account of himself in the skirmish that ensued. It was the first of a long series of successes, and he wrote of the victory with gratitude and pride:

“It was late in the evening when we drew out: they came and faced us within two miles of the town. So soon as we had the alarm, we drew out our forces, consisting of about twelve troops—whereof some of them so poor and broken [not these of Cromwell’s ‘lovely company’] that you shall seldom see worse: with this handful it pleased God to cast the scale. For after we had stood a little, above musket-shot the one body from the other; and the dragoons had fired on both sides, . . . we came on with our troops a pretty round trot; they standing firm to receive us: and our men charging freely upon them, by God’s providence they were immediately routed, and ran all away, and we had the execution of them two or three miles.”

He now pressed on to Gainsborough, and on his way thither captured Burleigh House. It



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was a fifty-mile march, and when he reached the outskirts of the town he found that the Royalist forces under Cavendish occupied a strong position on a hill. His men pressed gallantly up the steep slope: "When we all recovered the top of the hill, we saw a great body of the enemy's horse facing us, at about a musket-shot or less distance; and a good reserve of a full regiment of horse behind it. We endeavoured to put our men into as good order as we could. The enemy in the meantime advanced toward us, to take us at disadvantage; but in such order as we were we charged their great body, I having the right wing; we came up horse to horse; where we disputed it with our swords and pistols a pretty time; all keeping close order, so that one could not break the other." The Royalist force was completely routed, Cavendish was killed, and Gainsborough was relieved—to be taken and retaken again in the course of the war.

But a new peril was awaiting Cromwell's regiment, for Newcastle, with the main body of the Northern Royalist army, was in the neighbourhood. To risk an encounter would have been madness, for defeat would have left the way to London open to the victors. With consummate skill he managed to draw off his men. Three days later he was at Huntingdon

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making urgent appeals for troops to stay the march of Newcastle's army. In August he wrote to the Commissioners at Cambridge: "Raise all your bands; send them to Huntingdon; get up what volunteers you can; hasten your horses." And in another letter a day or two later he appealed for pay for his troops who were in dire need: "Gentlemen, make them able to live and subsist that are willing to spend their blood for you."

The House of Commons ordered that the force should be raised to 10,000 men; Manchester was appointed Commander of the Eastern Association and Cromwell Sergeant-Major of the Associated Counties.

In spite of Cromwell's successes, things were looking black for the Parliamentary cause. The Royalists were triumphing in many parts of the country. Gainsborough was recaptured and the whole of Lincolnshire except Boston fell into their hands. Bristol, the key to the West, had been captured by Prince Rupert; Dorchester had surrendered, and practically the whole county of Dorset was in the hands of the Royalists. Cromwell's work, however, did not lie in the South, and here Parliament appointed Sir William Waller to direct operations.

Cromwell joined Manchester and then set out to recapture Lincolnshire. They came upon a

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Royalist force at Winceby on October 11, 1643, and Cromwell, leading the van, fell with brave resolution upon the enemy. His horse was killed under him, but he sprang to his feet—only to be knocked down by a Cavalier. It was but for an instant. He was up again, seized a trooper's horse, remounted, and was in the thick of the fight, leading his men to victory. This brought Lincolnshire once more within the Parliamentary fold, and Lord Fairfax's triumph over Newcastle outside Hull greatly strengthened the position.

Both the King and Parliament considered it wise to seek other alliances and not to rely on England alone. Charles looked to Catholic Ireland and sent an appeal to Lord Ormond for troops; several regiments were sent over. Parliament looked to Protestant Scotland, and the northern kingdom, as a price for her aid, demanded the signing of the Solemn League and Covenant by the English people. The terms were accepted and in St Margaret's Church in Westminster members of both Houses foregathered, and swore with uplifted hands to extirpate "popery, prelacy, superstition, schism, and profaneness." This was the last work of the fine leader John Pym—'King Pym,' as he was nicknamed by the Royalists. Ere the year closed his career was over.

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The same year, 1643, marked the end of two other men, widely differing in point of view but alike in the purity of their motives. John Hampden, whose name is written in letters of gold in the annals of England, received his death-wound in a skirmish with Prince Rupert at Chalgrove Field. Lesser than he, and yet a man of great parts, Viscount Falkland, recklessly exposing himself in battle, fell fighting for the King at Newbury. Historians on both sides paid ungrudging tribute to his noble generous nature. He was able to see the good in friend as well as in foe, and his craving was for peace. He was "one of that rare band of the sons of time who find the world too vexed and rough a scene for them, but to whom history will never grudge her tenderest memories."

The early days of January 1644 were to mark the last stage of Archbishop Laud's earthly pilgrimage. He was sentenced to death by Lords and Commons and left the Tower for the scaffold. The King's heart may well have failed him on that winter day when Laud's grey hairs had not saved him from sharing Strafford's fate.

The New Year had opened well for Parliament and badly for the King, whose forces met with defeat at Nantwich and Cheriton. An army of 20,000 Scottish troops under Leslie

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crossed the border and marched to Durham. Newcastle, unable to bar their progress, shut himself up in York and was closely besieged by Leslie and the Fairfaxes.

Cromwell was in London at this time and received further proofs of the trust that Parliament reposed in him by being appointed a member of the Committee of Both Kingdoms and raised to the rank of Lieutenant-General, under Manchester. In truth, if not in name, Cromwell had become the leader.

The Solemn League and Covenant was now to be generally signed, and Cromwell went down to Cambridge to force it upon the people. The rough, harsh, overbearing side of his nature was brought out by this task. That aspect of Puritanism which all lovers of beauty must ever deplore became prominent. The Puritans, in their zeal against all that savoured of Romanism, wantonly damaged beautiful churches, destroyed noble monuments to the honoured dead, broke ancient stained-glass windows, and stabled their horses in cathedrals. It was an irreparable loss for all time that even their undoubted sincerity could not excuse.

We call to mind one scene in which Cromwell himself played the lead. The incumbent of Ely Cathedral, the Rev Mr Hitch, was commanded by him in a letter to "forbear

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altogether your choir service, so unedifying and offensive." Mr Hitch disobeyed and continued his ministrations as before. Cromwell then appeared in person in the cathedral, and without the formality of removing his hat marched up the aisle attended by a rabble, and in loud, strident tones informed the congregation: "I am a man under authority, and am commanded to dismiss this assembly." Then, turning to the clergyman who continued the service, he insolently bade him: "Leave off your fooling and come down, Sir." Mr Hitch was obliged to comply, but the honour and dignity remained on his side.

Cromwell had more important work to do in the course of the year than to bully the episcopalian clergy and acquiesce in the mutilation of sacred buildings. England must be won or lost for Parliament before the country could hope for peace. Up to the present no decisive blow had been struck. He rejoined Manchester and Fairfax in the North.

In June Prince Rupert was on the march northward to the relief of Newcastle and his 6000 men shut up in York. When the Parliamentary generals received news of his intention they raised the siege, with the intention of stopping his march. But he outwitted them, crossing by the opposite bank of the river to



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the one they expected and entered the town. Instead of remaining there, as would have been wise, he marched southward to attack the Parliamentary forces. The two armies met at Marston Moor, July 2, 1644. The troops on both sides, separated by a ditch, were drawn up in battle array, with infantry in the centre, cavalry on the right and left wings. Cromwell commanded on the left with David Leslie under him and was opposed to Prince Rupert's right. The Ironsides stood to arms in the long corn through the gloomy wet afternoon, raising their voices in battle-psalms of prayer and praise. The evening shadows were creeping over the land and the Cavalier leaders, not expecting an attack that day, had retired to rest, when they were hastily summoned by the news that a movement was taking place in the opposite camp. "God with us!" was roared from thousands of Roundhead throats; "God and the King!" shouted the Cavaliers.

At seven in the evening the battle began. Cromwell, backed by David Leslie, dashed across the ditch to engage Rupert's cavalry. He was slightly wounded, but "A miss is as good as a mile," he cried unheeding. The Ironsides immediately rallied from a temporary check, and came into hand-to-hand conflict with the enemy. They hacked them with their



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swords, and, breaking through at last, scattered them like 'a little dust.' So far all was well and Cromwell took a hurried survey of the battle-field. Fairfax was in sore plight, wounded, and with the greater part of his right wing defeated and in flight. The main struggle was now in the centre, where the Scottish infantry were being attacked in front and rear. Some fled before the terrible onslaught, but the majority stood their ground. Cromwell, by one of those master-strokes which reveal the born commander, swept across the moor at the head of his men, came to their aid at the right moment of time, and snatched victory out of defeat. The Royalists had fought a stubborn fight but the day was lost, and the flying soldiers were pursued in the bright July moonlight to within three miles of York.

Cromwell won golden opinions for his share of the victory, but in a letter which he wrote a day or two afterward he neglected to pay a generous tribute to the valour of the Scots, who had so large a share in the honours of the day. In a letter to Colonel Valentine Walton he says: "We never charged but we routed the enemy. The left wing which I commanded being our own horse, saving a few Scots in our rear beat all the Prince's horse. God made them as stubble to our swords." On the blood-soaked,

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trampled corn over four thousand lay dead, among them Walton's young son. Cromwell could well understand the bitterness of such a blow, for the Civil War had taken toll of his family and his son Oliver had fallen in a skirmish. Very touching are the words of sympathy in which he tells the father of his loss: "God hath taken away your eldest son by a cannon shot . . . you know my own trials this way: but the Lord supported me with this, that the Lord took him into the happiness we all pant for and live for. There is your precious child full of glory, never to know sin or sorrow any more. He was a gallant young man exceedingly gracious."

A few weeks after the Royalist cause had received this crushing defeat the surrender of York placed the North of England beyond the Humber in the hands of the Parliament.

## CHAPTER XI: *Naseby*

THE tide of the King's fortune was not yet at the ebb, for success in the South balanced disaster in the North. A victory at Cropredy Bridge in Oxfordshire (June 1644) had dispersed Waller's forces. In Cornwall a greater disaster had befallen the Parliamentary army under Essex. He had hoped to conquer that county but had miscalculated his chances. His army was penned between Lostwithiel and the sea, and, since it was hopeless to attack, he had fled to Plymouth, leaving his army to surrender. Parliament accepted news of the disaster 'with Roman fortitude.' To Cromwell it was but an additional evidence of Essex's unfitness for supreme command. He had noticed, too, that Manchester was half-hearted in his attempts to effect a settlement by arms. "We do with grief of heart," he writes to Colonel Walton, "resent the sad condition of our Army in the West, and of affairs there. . . . We have some among us slow in action: if we could all intend our own ends less, and our ease too, our business in this army would go on wheels for expedition!"

Cromwell was right. Manchester was weary of the struggle, and, worse still, he doubted his

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own cause. "If we beat the King ninety-and-nine times, yet he is King still, and so will his posterity be after him; but if the King beat us once we shall all be hanged and our posterity made slaves."

If these words were repeated to Charles they must have cheered him with the prospect of once more returning to his capital. He decided to march on London. For the second time in the Civil War, Newbury in Berkshire was the scene of an engagement. Here he met the Roundheads out to bar his progress, and an indecisive battle took place. The King retreated without loss and Manchester refused to ride in pursuit. Such indifference was but fuel to the flame of Cromwell's indignation with his chief. They had additional cause for quarrel in their religious differences, for Manchester was a leading Presbyterian and Cromwell was gradually becoming the representative Independent. He knew that if peace were to be restored to the distracted country complete success in arms was essential.

On November 25, 1644, he openly attacked Manchester in the House of Commons, bringing against him the black charge that he had always been indisposed and backward to engagements and the ending of the war by the sword, and always "for such a Peace as a thorough victory

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would be a disadvantage to." He accused him, too, of giving the enemy every advantage. Manchester defended himself in the House of Lords and replied by a counter-charge against Cromwell. It was reported that he had said "there would never be a good time in England till we had done with the Lords," and that he had expressed his contempt for the monarch by declaring that if he met him in battle he would as willingly fire at him as at any other man. Then, too, he had spoken disparagingly of the Scots, and the sensitive national pride had been wounded. The Scottish commissioners even proposed drastic measures of retaliation and held a meeting at Essex House to discuss the matter. "You ken vary weelee," said their spokesman, "that Lieutenant-General Cromwell is no friend of ours, and since the advance of our army into England, he hath used all underhand and cunning means to take off from our honour and merit of this kingdom. . . . You ken vary weelee the accord 'twixt the twa kingdoms, and the union by the Solemn League and Covenant, and if any be an Incendiary between the twa nations how he is to be proceeded against." It was, however, decided to await further developments in Cromwell's career, since he was 'a gentleman of quick and subtle parts' and not without friends in both Houses.

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Cromwell delivered a stirring speech in the House of Commons on December 9. "It is now time to speak," he said, "or forever hold the tongue. The important occasion now is no less than to save a nation, out of a bleeding nay almost dying condition: which the long continuance of the war hath already brought it into." He saw clearly that unless the war were speedily brought to an end people would hate the very name of Parliament and would enforce a dishonourable peace. What were they saying even now? "That the Members of both Houses have got great places and commands, and the sword into their hands; and, what by interest in Parliament, what by power in the Army, will perpetually continue themselves in grandeur, and not permit the war speedily to end, lest their own power should determine with it."

What was the remedy? A Self-Denying Ordinance by which the members of both Houses should resign all military command until the end of the war. This passed through the House of Commons but was unfavourably received by the Upper House, since from earliest times the lords had been leaders in warfare. A more drastic measure still was now proposed—the entire reconstruction of the Army on the lines of Cromwell's Ironsides. The New Model Army was to consist of 22,000 men (14,400 foot



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and 7600 horse and dragoons); the soldiers were to receive regular pay and to be used in any part of the country where they were required. It had been found that troops raised for the purpose of protecting one county or group of counties could scarcely be induced to leave their own neighbourhood. Sir Thomas Fairfax was placed in chief command, Skippon was appointed Major-General in place of Manchester, and the office of Lieutenant-General was left open for the time being.

Whether Cromwell expected to resign his commission or not is one of the secrets of history. One thing is certain—he did not do it. The Self-Denying Ordinance was no sooner passed than he was summoned to action once more and granted leave of absence from Parliament for forty days. At the end of that time the limit was extended and Fairfax signified his desire to appoint Cromwell to the vacant command.

The New Model Army was to turn the tide in the affairs of the Roundheads. From this time onward the Army and not the Parliament was the leading spirit in the Revolution. Cromwell, with a body of 600 horse and dragoons, joined his chief at Guilsborough; drums were beaten and trumpets sounded as the army welcomed each contingent at the rendezvous. All was in readiness for an instant



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march, and the following day the army set out in pursuit of the King, who had left Oxford with 5000 cavalry and about the same number of foot soldiers. In the early morning of June 14, 1645, the Royalists discerned the Parliamentary army cresting the hills round Naseby. Hopes were high on both sides and Cromwell was in the best of spirits. "When I saw the enemy draw up and march in gallant order toward us, and we a company of poor ignorant men, to seek how to order our battle—the General having commanded me to order all the horse—I could not, riding alone about my business, but smile out to God in praises, in assurance of victory, because God would, by things that are not, bring to naught things that are."

The chances were about equal. In numbers the Parliamentarians had the best of it, in experience the Royalists. The army was arranged in the same fashion as at Marston, with cavalry on each side and infantry in the centre. Skippon commanded the centre of the Parliamentary army, Ireton the left wing, and Cromwell the right. On the King's side Astley commanded the centre, with Rupert in charge of the left wing, and Langdale of the right. To the cry of "God our Strength!" Cromwell opened the battle by a successful charge and drove the enemy before him. Ireton's wing was broken

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by Rupert, and he himself was wounded and taken prisoner. Skippon was sore beset and severely wounded, and the Cavaliers were in a fair way to victory. But Cromwell repeated the tactics that had won him fame at Marston, and swooped round to attack the Royalist centre in front and rear.

They are here! They rush on! We are broken! We are gone!

Our left is borne before them like stubble on the blast.  
O Lord put forth thy might. O Lord defend the right!

Stand back to back, in God's name, and fight it to the last.

Stout Skippon hath a wound; the centre hath given ground,

Hark! Hark! what means the trampling of horsemen on our rear?

Whose banner do I see, boys? 'Tis he, thank God, 'tis he, boys!

Bear up another minute: brave Oliver is here!<sup>1</sup>

The Cavaliers, though hard pressed on all sides, held on unflinchingly in face of sure defeat. The King, at the head of his Guards, commanded: "One charge more, gentlemen, and the day is ours!" But the charge was never given. "Would you go to your death?" asked an officer who led him from the field. The Cavaliers fled, pursued for fourteen miles by the victors. The spoils of war included, besides

<sup>1</sup> Lord Macaulay, *The Battle of Naseby*.

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five thousand prisoners, the King's baggage and artillery, together with a haul of his private papers, which were to prove invaluable as evidence of his duplicity. He himself was a fugitive.

Naseby practically ended the first Civil War, though there was still work to do in the South in stamping out the Royalists and taking isolated strongholds. One of the most brilliant feats in Cromwell's military career was the taking of Basing House, fortified as a garrison for the King, and of great importance because it lay on the main road from London to the West. It had been besieged off and on during the last two years, but had withstood all attack until, four months after Naseby, Cromwell took it by storm in six days. The fine old fortress, some two or three hundred years old, was razed to the ground. Lathom House, gallantly defended for over two years by the Countess of Derby, who valued her honour beyond her peace of mind, was now obliged to capitulate.

With the capture of Bristol the West was secured for Parliament. The daring, headstrong, impetuous Rupert, the most brilliant officer on the King's side, fought for him no more—though later on he fought for the King's son. His career in England was at an end, and he and his brother Maurice were allowed to ship overseas.

## CHAPTER XII: *Parliament and the Army*

WHO was to be master of England?—the Presbyterian Parliament, the Independent Army, the Episcopalian King? From henceforth Parliament and the Army no longer worked harmoniously together—they were rivals, and in their discord the King saw his best chance of coming into his own.

But for the moment the Royalist cause was in sore straits. When Cromwell was occupied with the storming of Basing, Charles was awaiting events at Newark. He soon, however, left that town for the safer refuge of the Isle of Man. He returned to Oxford in November, still unable to think out any course, vainly hoping to obtain help from abroad and to rally an army once more to his standard. At the same time he was negotiating with the Scots, with Parliament, and the Army. His love of intrigue and his inability to keep faith with one party or another were a direct cause of his downfall. He decided that his best course for the present was to place himself in the hands of the Scots, and he joined the Scottish army at Southwell, May 5, 1646. It was a fateful and

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fatal step on his part. He was badly treated—"barbarously," so he said—and he was virtually a prisoner.

A week or so before this Cromwell, whose work in the field was over for the time, returned to London. He took lodgings in Drury Lane, then a fashionable part of the town, and was thus within easy walking or riding distance of Westminster. He attended the House and had the satisfaction of being publicly thanked for his services in the war. It was also arranged that, should terms be made with the King, Fairfax and Cromwell should be raised to the peerage with substantial yearly grants in payment of their services. Cromwell had not so far enriched himself by his exertions—rather the reverse. He had subscribed generously toward the cost of putting down the rebellion in Ireland, and he had had besides heavy personal expenses. He was now voted an income of £500 a year.

The mass of the people was weary of the struggle and longed for a peaceable settlement. They wanted to attend to their farms and fields, their shops and counting-houses, to marry and give in marriage, to resume without shocks and alarms the pleasant intercourse of daily life. When the country was in a state of such unrest few brides and bridegrooms plighted

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their troth at the altar—yet two of Cromwell's daughters had not been too greatly overburdened with anxiety to fall in love. Bridget, a girl of one and twenty, now the eldest of the family since Robert and Oliver were dead, was betrothed to Henry Ireton, her father's right-hand man, 'able with his pen and his sword,' who had made his reputation in the war in spite of his bad luck at Naseby. She was her father's daughter in the seriousness of her outlook on life and the deeply religious cast of her mind—a fitting mate for the uncompromising Republican who was some twelve years her senior. Her sister Elizabeth was a joyous, thoughtless girl, only sixteen at the time of her marriage to Mr Claypole, a youth of a good family in Northamptonshire. Cromwell's enemies often charged him with ambition and a desire to exalt himself above his fellows, but in assenting to the unions of his children these qualities are not shown, for they married into the class to which they had always belonged.

A few months after the wedding Cromwell wrote to Bridget a letter characteristic of his religious convictions. Few notes to his family are extant and probably he corresponded little, preoccupied as he was with public affairs.



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Nevertheless, family love was a strong trait in his character. The letter is as follows:

“DEAR DAUGHTER,—I write not to thy Husband; partly to avoid trouble, for one line of mine begets many of his, which I doubt makes him sit up too late; partly because I am myself indisposed at this time, having some other considerations.

“Your friends at Ely are well: your sister Claypole is, I trust in mercy, exercised with some perplexed thoughts. She sees her own vanity and carnal mind; bewailing it: she seeks after (as I hope also) what will satisfy. And thus to be a seeker is to be of the best sect next to a finder; and such an one shall every faithful humble seeker be at the end. Happy seeker, happy finder! Who ever tasted that the Lord is gracious, without some sense of self, vanity, and badness? Who ever tasted that graciousness of His and could go less in desire—less than pressing after full enjoyment? Dear Heart, press on; let not husband, let not anything cool thy affections after Christ. I hope he will be an occasion to inflame them. That which is best worthy of love in thy Husband is that of the image of Christ he bears. Look on that, and love it best, and all the rest for that. I pray for thee and him; do so for me.



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“My service and dear affections to the General and Generaless. I hear she is very kind to thee; it adds to all other obligations.

“I am, Thy dear Father,

“OLIVER CROMWELL.”

In the closing months of 1646 public affairs were in a state of chaos. Charles had reason bitterly to repent his surrender to the Scots, for they continually pressed him to sign the Solemn League and Covenant as the price of their support. He stubbornly refused, for he was ever loyal to his faith if not to his fellows. Parliament, though he was no less King of Scotland than King of England, had no intention of allowing him to remain in the hands of his northern subjects. Negotiations were opened with him at Newcastle, where the Scottish army was now encamped, and he was asked to consent to drastic limitations of his power. He was not yet desperate—France might come to his aid—and he therefore gave an evasive reply. Parliament now negotiated with his custodians. They signified their willingness to return to their own country on payment of their expenses (some £400,000) and to hand over the King, whose conversion to Presbyterianism was extremely remote, to the English commissioners. Scotland has been

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taunted with having sold her King, and though this is not exactly the case the monetary transaction has an unpleasant touch about it. The Scots were canny enough to want part of their money down before they packed their baggage, and Skippon was appointed to conduct the convoy of waggons, bearing bags and chests of gold, to be counted by the thrifty Scots at Newcastle ere the bargain was complete. With the clink of the last coin the English commissioners were free to escort the King southward once more. His journey was a royal progress and he was greeted with fervid loyalty by his subjects. Unfortunately for him, Charles overestimated the value of the enthusiasm displayed, and it had its after-effects in making a settlement with him impossible. Not far from the spot where he had first raised the standard at Nottingham he was met by Sir Thomas Fairfax, who kissed his hand and escorted him on horseback on the last stage of his journey to Holmby House in Northamptonshire. He was now in the hands of Parliament. What of the army?

“We are full of faction and worse,” Cromwell wrote to Fairfax, for there were all but insuperable difficulties to be faced on every side. Parliament, jealous of the army and aghast at the terrible expense of keeping up an armed

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force, determined to disband half the infantry and to send out regiments to put down rebellion in Ireland. But they had reckoned without the soldiery, who were well aware that the defeat of the Royalist cause was due to their prowess in the field. The Irish expedition did not appeal to them, and only one in ten volunteered to go. Then, too, they had other cause for rebellion, for their pay was months in arrear, and only meagre promises of payment were made. They also required assurance that none of their acts in the late war should be brought up against them. With the sword in their hands they had good authority to back them; if it were sheathed and they returned to their ploughshares, what hope was there in argument and remonstrance? They chose agents—called ‘Agitators’—to represent their grievances to Parliament, and a letter was sent to Cromwell and Skippon urging their influence on behalf of the men they had so ably led to victory. Cromwell, with Ireton, Fleetwood, and Skippon, went down to Saffron Walden to investigate their grievances and to promise them eight weeks’ arrears of pay, with a guarantee for the balance due.

Cromwell and the other officers finally decided to throw in their lot with the army. He had been expressly told that “if he would not forth-

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with come and head them, they would go their own way without him." His action averted another revolution. The officers were anxious to put themselves right with the City of London, and in a manifesto written from Royston, June 1647, they stated: "We have said before and profess it now, we desire no alteration of the Civil Government. . . . We seek the good of all." They had cause for anxiety in that the City of London—Presbyterian to the backbone—was no less hostile to the military than was Parliament itself. Cromwell was beginning to pay the penalty of all public men in that he was now well hated by a faction. "It is a miserable thing," he wrote, "to serve a Parliament to which, let a man be never so faithful, if one pragmatrical fellow amongst them rise and asperse him, he shall never wipe it off." He even had reason to fear arrest.

He now resolved on a bold step: the King was the key to the situation and the King should be under the protection of the army. Cornet Joyce, a tailor by trade, was sent to Holmby, ostensibly to prevent Charles from being removed. Whether he was acting on Cromwell's suggestion or not is unknown, but he knew what he was about. With an escort of five hundred men he reached the castle at ten at night. Leaving them without, he burst into the King's

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bedchamber and explained his errand. The following morning the King inquired by whose authority he was acting, and Joyce pointed to the troops in the courtyard. "As well written a commission and with as fine a frontispiece as I have ever seen in my life," remarked His Majesty, and he gladly rode forth in their company, hoping that a change of lodging might bring a change of luck.

Parliament and the City were apprehensive at this evidence of the army's determination to take matters into its own hands. The alarm was increased by the fear that the army, which was constantly changing its head-quarters, should march on London and enforce the demands embodied in the 'Declaration of the Army.' One of these was that Parliament should fix a date for its dissolution, another that eleven members known to be hostile should be suspended for six months. The members in question prudently absented themselves, but the City, incensed by this display of weakness, broke out into tumult. On July 26 many young men and apprentices "came down to the House in a most rude and tumultuous manner; and presented some particular Desires—Desires that the eleven may come back."

Tension was at its height when on August 3 the army entered the town, but sober counsel

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prevailed and negotiations took place in the Earl of Holland's house in Kensington—that historic house which still stands. Parliament and the City submitted.

Once more an attempt was made to come to terms with the King and he was asked to assent to the 'Heads of the Proposals,' a document drawn up by Ireton, which, though curtailing his power, was on the whole generous in its terms. Charles, upheld by the conviction of his own importance, refused. "You cannot do without me," he said; "you will fall to ruin if I do not sustain you." Unfortunately there was growing up in the country a party (known as the Levellers) which was fully prepared to do without him. In a document called 'The Agreement of the People' they proposed, as Cromwell said, "very great alterations of the government of the kingdom—alterations of that government it hath been under ever since it was a nation." While this was being hotly debated in Parliament—Cromwell himself was against it, for he thought it would bring the kingdom to desolation—the King escaped from Hampton Court. He was, however, only to find a drearier prison at Carisbrooke Castle in the Isle of Wight.



## CHAPTER XIII: *The Fate of Charles Stuart*

THE King, now at his wits' end for his restoration, once more made terms with the Scots. He no longer doubted that the 'Solemn League and Covenant' was the be-all and end-all with them, just as his own faith was with him. Hence he promised to confirm it by Act of Parliament provided that he and his household might be exempt from signing it. This led to the short and sharp issue of the second Civil War. On April 11 the Scottish Parliament resolved that the treaty between the two kingdoms had been broken, and that England should be forced to establish Presbyterianism.

To outward seeming the Royalist cause was once more in the ascendant, and insurrections had broken out in many parts of the country. Cromwell was sent to Wales to put down a rising there, Lambert marched to the North to intercept the Scottish army when it crossed the border, and Fairfax himself went to Essex and there laid siege to Colchester, which was held by the Royalists. At the beginning of the year Parliament, weary of negotiations that ended in nothing, had resolved by the vote on



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‘No Addresses’ that it would have no further parleying with the King. The hopelessness of any settlement with such an intriguer had converted Cromwell at length to this view, and henceforth he held that “Parliament should govern and defend the kingdom by their own power, and not teach the people any longer to expect safety and government from an obstinate man whose heart God hath hardened.”

He spent a couple of months in Wales, and the most important of his exploits was the siege of Pembroke Castle, which made a stubborn resistance and surrendered only through starvation. The besiegers were in little better plight, and were living for the most part on bread and water.

Three days before this happened—that is, on July 8—a Scottish army under the Marquis of Hamilton had crossed the border. Directly Cromwell’s work in the West was accomplished he was free to go North and join forces with Major-General Lambert. It was a sorry army he brought with him, for his men were worn out with the ardours of the Welsh campaign and seemed fitter for a hospital than a battle-field. On August 12 he joined Lambert, and the combined Roundhead host of some 8000 was greatly outnumbered by the 21,000 under Hamilton. The enemy was marching South to

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London, and Cromwell, whose one idea was to be up and at them, upon deliberate advice decided to put his army between them and Scotland, thus barring their passage North to seek reinforcements. He hastened on until he reached Preston, and here he first came on the enemy moving, almost strolling, southward in loose order. "We were about four miles from Preston, and thereupon we advanced with the whole army: the enemy being drawn out on a moor betwixt us and the town, the armies on both sides engaged; and after a very sharp dispute continuing for three or four hours, it pleased God to enable us to give them a defeat." The importance of this attack was that, though it still left Hamilton the advantage in numbers, it cut the Scottish army in two; one detachment then moved North and the other South, to be pursued and taken by the Roundheads in a series of sharp conflicts in the course of the two following days, during which time it was 'one long chase and carnage.' Cromwell pursued the northern detachment and a serious engagement took place near Wigan. "They drew off again and recovered Wigan before we could attempt anything upon them. We lay that night in the field close by them, being very dirty and weary, and having marched twelve miles on such ground as I never rode in all my

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life, the day being very wet. . . . We could not engage the enemy until we came within three miles of Warrington." Here the Scottish force was badly beaten. Among the mortally wounded on the other side was Colonel Thornhaugh, to whom in her Memoirs, Mrs Hutchinson pays tribute when she declares that "a man of greater courage and integrity fell not, nor fought not, in this glorious cause."

Ten thousand prisoners were taken, but the loss in dead and wounded was not estimated. Hamilton was among the fugitives, but he was caught and the following year paid penalty on the scaffold. The Scottish army was no more.

The victory of Preston disheartened the besieged in Colchester and the garrison surrendered. Two of the leaders, Sir Charles Lucas and Sir George Lisle, gave themselves up to mercy and were shot. Such is war.

Cromwell remained in the North to take Berwick and Carlisle, and he crossed the Tweed to impress Scotland with the fact that he believed the soldiery sent forth to fight were innocent of any interest in the matter.

Colonel Hammond, the King's gaoler at Carisbrooke, became most disheartened at the course of affairs and wrote on this subject to Cromwell. His letter in reply is one of the

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most remarkable that has come down to us, for it is full of tenderness, and breathes in every line his inalienable trust in God. "Let us look into Providences," he said; "surely they mean somewhat. They hang so together, have been so constant, so clear, unclouded."

By the time that young Colonel Hammond received this missive his august prisoner was no longer in his custody, for the heads of the army, resolving to keep him in even closer captivity, had taken him to Hurst Castle, a desolate building on the Hampshire coast. "You could not have chosen a worse," murmured the monarch with foreboding when told of his destination.

With the laurels of victory green on his brow Cromwell returned to London. Here events had been progressing with lightning speed. The decision to have no further intercourse with the King had been overruled, and Parliament reopened negotiations with him in September.

The history of the next few weeks might be told in a series of glaring headlines, for every day had a fresh sensation. The army, indignant at Parliament's attempt at a settlement with Charles, was for drastic action. Once more it had shed its blood—only to find the settlement of the country as far off as ever. Any agreement between the Presbyterians and the Royalists would mean it had been shed in vain,

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and the independence of its religious faith would be at stake. Strafford and Laud had paid the penalty of the country's misgovernment with their lives; the third victim had yet to come to judgment. What had been whispered in corners was now to be proclaimed on the house-tops. The resolution was put into words in a meeting of the army held at Windsor: "If ever the Lord brought us back again in peace, to call Charles Stuart, the man of blood, to an account for the blood he had shed against the Lord's cause and the people in these poor nations." In the 'Remonstrance of the Army,' drawn up by Ireton, his trial and execution were demanded. The Remonstrance was laid before the House, but it was set aside, and by the decision of the majority further negotiations were opened with the King. The leaders of the army now determined on drastic action. To dissolve Parliament at such a moment was impossible, but it could be purged of Presbyterians. "We shall know," said Vane, "who is on the side of the King and who on the side of the people."

The army marched to London, and at seven in the morning on December 6, Colonel Pride with a regiment of soldiers reached Westminster. He held in his hand a list of offending members who were to be barred entrance.

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“By what right do you act?” one asked.

“By the right of the sword,” was the reply.

In all one hundred and forty members were expelled, and some of them were lodged for the night in a tavern with the ominous sign-post of Hell. From that time forward the Long Parliament ceased to exist in all but name. Cromwell, though he was not a party to this act of military despotism, yet approved of it.

The ‘Rump,’ as this mutilated assembly was afterward called, now proceeded to business, and nominated one hundred and thirty-five commissioners to try the King for treason in that he had levied war against Parliament. The House of Lords rejected the Bill, and the Commons therefore decided to dispense with their approval. “The people,” they asserted, “are, under God, the original of all just power.” Unfortunately for the relevance of this assertion, the assembly was in no way representative of the people.

Half of the appointed commissioners refused to take part or lot in the trial of the King—among these were Fairfax, whose wife dissuaded him, Vane, the friend of Milton, a man of high intellectual powers, a pure patriot if ever there was one, and Algernon Sidney, who declared that “the King could be tried by no court, and that by such a court as that no man could be tried.”



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Cromwell interrupted him in anger: "I tell you," he said, "we will cut off his head with the crown upon it."

"I cannot stop you," replied Sidney, "but I will keep myself clean from having any hand in this business."

Charles had been removed from Hurst Castle to Windsor and thence to St James's to await events. His trial was practically a court-martial, and such courts, by a curious irony of fate, had been expressly condemned by the Petition of Right.

All was now ready for the last act but one of the tragedy of Charles I. The commissioners, seated in the Painted Chamber, were discussing the final stages of procedure on the morning of January 20, 1649, when a messenger brought tidings that the King was disembarking at the river-side. Cromwell rushed to the window and it was noticed that he had turned deathly pale as he gazed for a moment without. Then, facing his colleagues, his harsh voice scarcely under control, he cried: "My masters, he is come, he is come, and now we are doing that great work that the whole nation will be full of. Therefore I desire you to resolve here what answer we shall give the King when he comes before us, for the first question he will ask us will be by what authority and commission do



"MY MASTERS, HE IS COME, HE IS COME"



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we try him?" After a moment's silence one of the members replied: "In the name of the Commons in Parliament assembled and all the good people of England."

That same afternoon Westminster Hall was the stage of the most significant scene in our constitutional history. At one end a platform had been erected, and here, tier above tier, sat the King's accusers, Cromwell among them. Serjeant Bradshaw, a shrewd lawyer who had been chosen President, was the central figure. Charles sat, his head covered, facing his judges, his back to the throng of spectators. As he listened, seemingly indifferent, to the indictment, his mind must have wandered back to that scene which took place eight years earlier, when he had abandoned his friend in like peril of death. He denied the authority of the court and refused to plead since a king could be tried by no earthly tribunal. He stood, he said, for the freedom and liberty of the people of England. The proceedings were constantly interrupted by the audience who, beside themselves with excitement, were shouting each other down with cries of "Justice!" and "God save your Majesty!" After five days' trial the King was condemned to death, and the second to sign the warrant was Oliver Cromwell. Such was his conviction that

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Charles must die that it is said he held the pen and forced the hand of one commissioner who showed hesitation in appending his signature to the parchment.

On the day appointed for his execution the King left St James's Palace at ten in the morning, with Colonel Tomlinson and an escort of foot for his guard, Bishop Juxon for his consoler, and friends to bear him company. On reaching Whitehall he was offered refreshment, but he refused all but a glass of wine and a piece of bread. As the clock struck twelve he was brought through the Banqueting Hall to the scaffold draped with black. There lay the axe and block, and there stood two masked executioners. He addressed a few words to those around him, since his voice could not carry to the thronging multitude below:

"For the people I desire their liberty and freedom as much as anybody whomsoever. . . . If I would have given way to have all changed according to the power of the sword, I needed not to have come here; and therefore I tell you (and I pray God it be not laid to your charge) that I am a martyr of the people."

His last words, as recorded in the old chronicle, were with Dr Juxon.

*The King:* "I have a good cause and a gracious God on my side."

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*Dr Juxon:* "There is but one stage more, this stage is turbulent and troublesome; it is a short one, but you may consider it will soon carry you a very great way, it will carry you from Earth to Heaven, and there you shall find a great deal of cordial joy and comfort."

*The King:* "I go from a corruptible to an incorruptible crown where no disturbance can be."

*Dr Juxon:* "You are exchanged from a temporal to an eternal crown, a good exchange."

The King arranged his hair under his cap, presented his order of the Knight of the Garter to the Bishop, murmured "Remember," and knelt at the block, bowing his head in prayer. A moment later he gave the signal. With one blow the head was severed, and the weeping multitude groaned in pity as it was held up to their view.

That night, as the coffined body lay in Whitehall, Cromwell stood and gazed upon the features of the man against whom he had fought so well. "The King was a goodly man and might have lived for many years," he murmured. Then, taking a last farewell, he was heard to mutter: "Stern necessity!"



## CHAPTER XIV: *The Commonwealth*

THE King is dead! From Cheapside and at the appointed places the trumpets blare forth and the heralds announce: "Whoever shall proclaim a new King Charles the Second or another, without authority of Parliament in this nation, shall be a traitor and suffer death."

A week later the House of Commons was at work with a Bill to abolish the House of Lords and the kingship. England was to be a Commonwealth, governed by "the supreme authority of this nation, the representatives of this people in Parliament." A council of state, consisting of forty-one members, was nominated, with Bradshaw as President, Cromwell and Fairfax among its members, and John Milton as secretary for foreign tongues. Writs were to run "in the name of the Keepers of the Liberties of England." The royal seal was broken up and the seal of the Commonwealth was struck, bearing on one side the arms of England and Scotland and on the other a representation of the House of Commons.

As a precaution against Royalist devotion it was ordered that all statues of the late King

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should be removed. Not content with this the statue at the Royal Exchange was replaced by an inscription, *Exit Tyrannus Regum Ultimus*, dated "the first year of freedom by God's blessing restored." The following year Henrietta Maria's statue in Great Queen Street—the highway named after her—was broken up.

Scotland in the meantime had asserted her independence by proclaiming Charles II King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland. The Duke of Ormond upheld the Royalist banner in Ireland, and assured Charles that, should he land there, he would be welcomed by three-quarters of the population.

Cromwell was not so entirely immersed in public affairs as to be unmindful of his family. A couple of days after the King's execution he was to be found corresponding about the betrothal of his idle son Richard to Dorothy Mayor. Cromwell had no delusions as to his son's capabilities or character, and he was anxious that his future bride should be a lady of good disposition rather than that she should be of noble birth. Dorothy Mayor satisfied his expectations, and in a letter to his "very loving friend," Mr Robinson, preacher at Southampton, he wrote: "Upon your testimony of the Gentlewoman's worth, and the common report of the piety of the family, I shall be willing to

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entertain the renewing of the motion, upon such conditions as may be to mutual satisfaction."

A few weeks later he wrote to the lady's father — "My very worthy friend Richard Mayor Esquire"—thanking him for the kind reception given to his son "in the liberty given him to wait upon your worthy daughter, the report of whose virtue and godliness has so great a place in my heart, that I think fit not to neglect anything on my part which may consummate a close of the business if God please to dispose the young ones' hearts thereunto." The "young ones'" hearts were in the right place, but a difference arose between the two fathers as to the marriage portion. Cromwell was unable to give his son the income derived from a very large share of the estate.

"I have two young daughters to bestow, if God give them life and opportunity. According to your offer, I have nothing for them; nothing at all in hand. If my son die, what consideration is there to me? And yet a jointure parted with 'on my side.' If she die, there is 'on your side' little money parted with."

Such were the business-like methods of seventeenth-century parents in discussing their children's unions! The lovers, happy in their

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courtship, might at any time be parted by a parental decree. Both fathers meant to have their own way. "What you demand of me," Cromwell wrote again, "is very high in all points. I am willing to settle as you desire in everything: saving for maintenance £400 per annum, £300 per annum."

At last all negotiations were concluded. Richard Cromwell and Dorothy Mayor were married and settled down to an idyllic life in the country.

Cromwell's story once more is woven into the web of history. The young Commonwealth was beset with difficulties without and within. His first task was to subjugate Ireland, hot with unrest, a valuable recruiting ground for Royalism, a home of Roman Catholicism.

The Protestant settlement of Ulster in James I's reign had been affected by the dispossession of the native Irish, who from time immemorial had lived on the land, and by the making of grants of their estates to Englishmen. Every kind of legal quibble, every unfair advantage, had been taken to effect this displacement. Bitter hatred of the usurpers was the result. Strafford had ruled Ireland with an iron hand—he was a tyrant but allowed no lesser tyrants to hold sway — and when he was recalled in 1639 the

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seething discontent in the country broke out into revolt. This led in 1641 to the terrible massacre of the Ulster Protestants. To avenge this massacre and to restore order in Ireland was the first task of the new Government.

Before Cromwell started on his new campaign there was trouble with the army at home. The soldiers to see service in Ireland were chosen by a curious ceremony in Whitehall. Fourteen regiments forgathered there, and, after a prayer had been offered up, fourteen slips of paper were cut, seven bearing the word 'Ireland,' seven blank. A child was called in to draw the lots and to present the strips to the officers commanding the regiments, thus ensuring, so they fully believed, that "the whole disposition thereof was of the Lord." The officers accepted their commands, but the men of a more worldly frame of mind were unwilling to risk their lives once more until arrears had been paid. Mutiny broke out in London, and one of the ringleaders was shot in St Paul's Churchyard as a warning to others. His friends gave him a public funeral and it was attended by a great concourse of people. It was an ill omen for the authority of the Commonwealth.

The changes and chances of this mortal life, greater than ever in such a time of transition,

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had made men's minds ferment with half-digested ideas. This was nowhere more apparent than among the fighting men. The Levellers, led by one Everard, an ex-soldier inspired by a vision, believed that the "time of deliverance was at hand; and God would bring his people out of this slavery, and restore them to their freedom in enjoying the fruits and benefits of the Earth." With this in view they appropriated some common land at St George's Hill in Surrey, began to dig the ground and sow roots and beans, inviting any who wished to do so to work with them, with the full assurance of meat, drink, clothes, and no money. When they were brought before Cromwell they refused to uncover their heads because he was but their fellow-creature. In this and in other ways their religion was the germ of Quakerism, a sect which was to be founded a few years later by George Fox.

The Levellers were outdone in extravagance by a new sect which had arisen—the Fifth Monarchy men. The four monarchies of old Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome had passed away, and the time was now ripe for the coming of the Fifth Monarchy—that of Christ on earth. All ordinary forms of government were to be abolished and the saints were to rule.

The leader of the Levellers was John Lilburn,



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whom Cromwell had championed in early Parliamentary days, and who was now to be his remorseless critic and opponent. Lilburn was very popular and his influence quickly spread.

Open mutiny broke out in the provinces among the soldiers, who held these new principles. Something was to be done instantly. Cromwell knew no half-measures. "I tell you," he said in the Council, "you have no other way to deal with these men but to break them in pieces or they will break us." Accompanied by Fairfax he marched at top speed to Salisbury. The rebels, hearing of his approach, had pressed on to Burford in Oxfordshire, and, being very weary, had gone to bed. Cromwell and Fairfax, after a march of nearly fifty miles, reached the town as the clocks were striking midnight. A shot or two and the mutiny was quashed! The ringleaders were captured; three of them were executed in Burford churchyard in the morning; a fourth, who expressed penitence, was pardoned. Cromwell, by way of emphasizing the lesson, entered the church and addressed the men with such eloquence that they wept. Levellers and Fifth Monarchy men were sufficiently discomfited to be aware that the times were not yet ripe either for a return to the simplicity of the Garden of Eden or for the second coming of Christ.

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There was no further delay in recruiting for the Irish campaign. On July 10, 1649, Cromwell left London, travelling in almost royal state in a coach drawn by six noble Flanders horses, accompanied by many carriages, with an escort of eighty Life-guardsmen, all of them men of breeding. Passing through Windsor the cavalcade reached Bristol. Several of Cromwell's letters to his friends are dated from this town, and among them is one to Richard Mayor, who had the opportunity of being the wise counsellor to Richard Cromwell, a position which the father would have filled in times of peace. The father knows the son's weakness, and is troubled by his feeble, irresolute nature: "I am very glad to hear of your welfare, and that our children have so good leisure to make a journey and to eat cherries—it is very excusable in my daughter: I hope she may have a very good pretence for it! I assure you, Sir, I wish her very well; and I believe she knows it. I pray you tell her from me, I expect she writes often to me; by which I shall understand how all your family doth, and she will be kept in some exercise. I have delivered my son up to you; and I hope you will counsel him; he will need it, and indeed I believe he likes well what you say, and will be advised by you. I wish he may be serious, the times require it."

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Once again he wrote to the same correspondent when "Aboard the *John*" at Milford Haven, announcing to him the good news received from Ireland, where Lieutenant-General Jones, who had been sent in advance, had gained an important victory over Ormond outside Dublin. It was, he said, "an astonishing mercy so great and seasonable that indeed we are like them that dreamed." He then reverted once more to private affairs and his deep concern for his son: "I envy him not his contents; but I fear he should be swallowed up in them. I would have him mind and understand business, read a little history, study the mathematics and cosmography: these are good, with subordination to the things of God. Better than idleness or mere outward worldly contents. These fit for public services for which a man is born."

To Richard in person he did not write, but by the same messenger he sent a letter of tender solicitude to his daughter-in-law. "I desire you both to make it above all things your business to seek the Lord: to be frequently calling upon Him that He would manifest Himself to you in His Son; and be listening what returns He makes to you, for He will be speaking in your ear and in your heart, if you attend thereunto. As for the pleasures

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of this life, and outward business let that upon the bye.”

For the next few months Cromwell had no call for tenderness. He went to Ireland as an avenger of the Protestant massacre, as a General of the Commonwealth intent on the recognition of the new government at the point of the sword.

He landed on August 15 with some 9000 men in 100 ships, and was received with enthusiasm in Dublin, where great guns boomed his welcome. He addressed the cheering crowds from his coach, speaking of the great work in front of him—stern vengeance to be followed by the peaceful settlement of the country. He also issued a proclamation forbidding the soldiery to rob and pillage the country people unless in arms. After giving his men a fortnight's rest he set out for Drogheda, into which town Ormond had thrown 3000 troops, English, Royalists, and Irish Catholics, the flower of his army. On September 3—a day to be ever memorable in Cromwell's life—he reached the town and summoned it to surrender. The governor refused. The following day the storm began. Twice the Cromwellian soldiers were hurled back, but, leaping once more into the breach, they broke, with the fury of battle on them, into the town. The governor stood

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at bay on the Mill Mount with a human palisade of 300 men. He was persuaded to disarm, but this did not save his soldiers, who were all put to the sword. Worse was to follow. Cromwell gave orders that there should be no quarter. "Being in the heat of action I forbade them to spare any that were in arms in the town; and, I think, that night they put to the sword about 2000 men; divers of the officers and soldiers being fled over the bridge into the other (the northern) part of the town, where about a hundred of them possessed St Peter's Church steeple, some of the west gate, and others a strong round tower next the gate called St Sunday's. These being summoned to yield to mercy, refused. Whereupon I ordered the steeple of St Peter's Church to be fired, when one of them was heard to say in the midst of the flames: 'God damn me, God confound me; I burn, I burn.' "

The following day two other towers surrendered. One showed fight but was compelled to submit. As a punishment the officers were knocked on the head and a tenth of the soldiery were put to death. The remainder, with the garrison from the second tower, were taken prisoner and shipped to Barbados. To Cromwell it was retribution: "It is remarkable that these people, at the first, set up the

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Mass in some places of the town that had been monasteries; but afterward grew so insolent that, the last Lord's Day before the storm, the Protestants were thrust out of the great church called St Peter's, and they had public Mass there: and in this very place near 1000 of them were put to the sword, fleeing thither for safety. I believe all their friars were knocked on the head promiscuously but two."

Such was Cromwell's vengeance. He never felt remorse. It was the righteous judgment of God for past misdeeds and necessary to prevent future bloodshed. Historians have differed in their verdict upon it. Carlyle has justified this barbarous revenge for a barbarous massacre, but even in war time "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" is hardly acceptable as an interpretation of God's will.

The massacre justified itself in this at least, that the news spread like wildfire and struck terror into Irish hearts. Trim and Dundalk were abandoned, Ross opened its gates. In September we find Cromwell at Wexford, a strongly garrisoned town with two thousand men and a hundred cannon, protected on the water side by a couple of well-armed ships. The sack of Wexford was but a repetition of the sack of Drogheda. Cromwell opened negotiations with the governor and assured him that,



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should he refuse to surrender, he would be guilty of shedding innocent blood. The governor wrote spirited replies, and said that he would make no conditions but such as were honourable to himself and his party. Cromwell would not consent to terms, and the governor wrote once more: "I leave you to your better judgment, and myself to the assistance of the Almighty."

In order to bring matters to a crisis Cromwell decided to concentrate his attention on the taking of Wexford Castle. The castle was ultimately betrayed by a traitor within the walls, and the Irish garrison withdrew into the town, hotly pursued by the Cromwellians, who "ran violently upon the town with their leaders and stormed it. And when they were come into the market-place, the enemy making a stiff resistance, our forces brake them; and then put all to the sword that came in their way. Two boatfuls of the enemy, attempting to escape, being overprest with numbers, sank; whereby were drowned near three hundred of them. I believe, in all, there was lost of the enemy not many less than two thousand; and I believe not twenty of yours from first to last of the siege." The soldiers rejoiced in excellent booty, such as iron, hides, tallow, salt, pine, and barrel-staves—somewhat heavy merchandise

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that would require either immediate purchase or a special vessel to convey it to the English ports.

Hostilities were suspended for a short time and the army went into winter quarters. Many of the troops fell ill with dysentery and Cromwell himself was laid up with ague. When the army took the field again town after town in central Ireland was taken. Clonmel was captured after a stiff fight and heavy loss to the Commonwealth army; Waterford still held out, and Cromwell was not able to remain to complete his work of subjugation. Danger was threatening the Commonwealth from Scotland, and he was recalled to England. Ireton remained behind as Deputy-Lieutenant.

Two years were to pass before Ireland was finally crushed. Cromwell's fatal policy for the unhappy land was as James I's had been, to dispossess the native Irish and to replace them by Protestant settlers. As a first step in depopulation all who had been concerned in the Protestant massacre were court-martialled and in most cases they were put to death. A sadder fate befell the wives and children of Irish officers and soldiers who had left them behind and enlisted in foreign service, for they were shipped to the West Indies and sold as slaves.

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The evicted Irish, driven from the homes where they had tilled their fertile fields from generation to generation, were allowed to settle on a strip of desolate land in Connaught between the Shannon and the sea. An order was issued that from May 1, 1654, all who were found elsewhere were to be put to death. So barren and fruitless was their new inheritance that one of the Parliamentary commissioners sent to investigate wrote that there was not "water enough to drown a man, trees enough to hang a man, or earth enough to bury a man."

The race could not thus be stamped out. The new settlers intermarried with the conquered, many of whom made terms with their supplanters. Seeds of hatred had been sown between Irish Catholic and English Protestant which were to ripen to a full harvest in the time to come. And to this day the Protector's name is associated with the bitter racial and religious feud by the peasant's deepest oath, "the curse of Cromwell."

## CHAPTER XV: *Cromwell in Scotland*

THE conquering hero returned to England. He was welcomed by Fairfax and the chief officers at Hounslow Heath, and they rode with him in triumphant progress to Hyde Park, amid tumults of wild rejoicing.

While he was still absent Parliament had secured for him the use of the Cockpit, a house opposite Whitehall. Here his wife and two unmarried daughters lived, and here his married children came on visits to see their mother and hear the news of town. With what eagerness they must have welcomed him on his return! What family news there must have been to tell! What stories of the great campaign! What tender solicitude his wife must have expressed for all that he had suffered! How gladly would she have kept him at home—but the time to sheath his sword was not yet.

Scotland had still to be reckoned with. The proclamation of Charles Stuart as Charles II was no empty form. The King and the Covenant were what the nation stood for, and this not for itself alone but for England and Ireland.

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If Charles would have Scotland's help to regain his father's throne he must not only accept the Covenant himself, but he must force it on his unwilling subjects when he should come into his own again. Since England would not have a king—Charles Stuart or any other—forced on her by Scotland, the issue had to be put to the test of trial by battle.

To many men of the Commonwealth the Scottish campaign was not so easily justified as the Irish one. The two warring nations were both Protestant and the difference between Presbyterian and Independent was but slight. Both sects sought guidance from the Scriptures—the Old Testament by preference—and hurled texts at one another as the last word in argument. Both believed in the direct influence of God in human affairs, and both equally distrusted and detested Roman Catholicism. Fairfax, with whom such considerations had much weight, under his wife's advice declined to take part in the campaign. Cromwell entreated his old chief to reconsider his decision—but in vain, and from this time onward Fairfax no longer plays a prominent part in history. By an Act of June 26, 1650, Cromwell was appointed Commander-in-Chief in his stead. Congratulations poured in upon him, but he had too much

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to do to pay much heed to them, for the Scottish expedition had to be set on foot immediately.

In spite of his many preoccupations Cromwell found time to write to Richard Mayor, and to make inquiries after his baby grandchild: "I should be glad to hear how the little brat doth. I could chide both Father and Mother for their neglects of me: I know my son is idle but I had better thoughts of Doll. . . . I hope you give my son good counsel; I believe he needs it. He is in the dangerous time of his age; and it's a very vain world. O, how good it is to close with Christ betimes!—there is nothing else worth the looking after. . . . Great place and business in the world is not worth the looking after; I should have no comfort in mine but that my hope is in the Lord's presence. I have not sought these things; truly I have been called unto them by the Lord; and therefore I am not without some assurance that He will enable His poor worm and weak servant to do His will, and to fulfil my generation. In this I desire your prayers."

Cromwell had under him Major-General Lambert, Fleetwood and Monk, and a force of some 16,000 men. Leaving London on June 29 he marched northward and passed through Berwick



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on July 22. Thence he crept cautiously along the coast, using the ships of the English fleet, which had followed him up, for his base of provisions.

On reaching Musselburgh, Cromwell issued a letter to the members of the General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland, in which he dealt straightly with them. He would have averted warfare if he could, but if it were to be: "Your own guilt is too much for you to bear, bring not therefore upon yourselves the blood of innocent men—deceived with pretences of King and Covenant; from whose eyes you hide a better knowledge. . . . There may be a *covenant* made with Death and Hell; I will not say yours was so."

Cromwell can hardly have expected a spirited people to have laid down their arms on receipt of this communication. If he did, his expectations were vain. On August 13 he reached Braid Hill outside Edinburgh. Here his former comrade of Marston Moor, David Leslie, was now the commander of his foes, and with some 18,000 men was strongly entrenched. Leslie had no intention of coming out into the open. His aim was to weary and starve out the English forces. By the end of August they were in a sorry plight and the half-fed men fell an easy prey to disease. Seeing that an engagement at Edinburgh was out of the question, Cromwell

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retreated thirty miles south to Dunbar, on the coast. Leslie followed him in close pursuit and encamped his troops on the Lammermuir Hills, occupying the rocky pass at Copperspath, thus cutting off Cromwell's retreat to England. Leslie, with his troops in the commanding position, may well have anticipated victory. Cromwell, hemmed in by the hills and the sea, and with the road to England blocked, did not blind himself to the possibility of defeat. His courage rose with difficulties—and he was ever a man of resource. He wrote a letter to the Governor of Newcastle, marking it "Haste, Haste": "The enemy hath blocked up our way at the pass of Copperspath, through which we cannot get without almost a miracle. He lieth so upon the hills that we know not how to come that way without great difficulty; and our lying here daily consumeth our men, who fall sick beyond imagination." He begged him to get together what forces he could, and to send to friends in the south to help with more: "Let H. Vane know what I write. I would not make it public lest danger should accrue thereby."

Fate played into Cromwell's hands. Had Leslie stuck to his original scheme—which was to fall on Cromwell's rear when he attempted to force the road south—the defeat of the English

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forces was all but inevitable. As it was, he changed his plans—counselled, some said, by his ministers, to whom the soldiers paid more heed than to the generals. The English fleet lay at sea, the English army was on the shore, and Leslie, closely watching their movements, thought that Cromwell in his desperation was going to embark guns and foot-soldiers. Consequently he began to move his troops down from the hills to prevent their embarkation. Cromwell, walking with Lambert, noticed the change of plans and cried exultingly: “The Lord hath delivered them into our hands.”

Leslie’s army was now in a vulnerable position, since his left wing was shut in between hill and ravine, and the centre, with the hills at its back, was too much cramped to move freely. With his strategic eye Cromwell saw that what he had to do was to defeat the right wing, then the whole of the army would be in confusion.

The night of September 2 was windy and wet. The harvest moon rose in the stormy sky and shed a ghastly light on the motionless figures sheltering by the stacks of sodden corn. Some slept fitfully, some prayed mournfully, but all were ready for instant action. As the early dawn rose over mountain and sea the blare of trumpets broke the silence with the

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call to arms. Louder and louder they sounded forth, while from the throats of thousands of Englishmen rose the battle-cry, "The Lord of Hosts!" and from the opposite camp the rallying cry, "The Covenant!" To Lambert and Fleetwood, with six regiments of horse, were entrusted the attack on Leslie's right wing; Monk attacked the central wing, while Cromwell cannonaded the whole body of the Scottish army with his big guns. The Scottish lancers gave a good account of themselves and Lambert was driven back, but, rallying his troops, he charged once more and broke through the ranks. The fight was short and sharp. "At push of pike" the English repelled the foe. After an hour's fierce attack the sun broke out red over the northern sea and was reflected in the dyed waters of the burn. In that hour terrible execution had been done and the Scottish army was utterly defeated. In his exultation Cromwell cried aloud: "Let God arise and let His enemies be scattered." He ordered his victorious army to sing the 117th Psalm: "O praise the Lord, all ye nations: praise Him all ye people. For His merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever. Praise ye the Lord."

The men's voices rang out clear in the early

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autumn air. When the last sounds had died away their leader bade them pursue the enemy. For eight miles they gave chase, killing, wounding and taking prisoner. Three thousand were killed, ten thousand taken prisoner; the baggage and artillery fell into the hands of the victors; two hundred colours were taken, to be hung in Westminster Hall beside the trophies of Preston. The English losses were about thirty men and a couple of officers.

On the morrow Cromwell issued a proclamation by beat of drum, informing the country-folk they might take away their wounded provided they did not purloin any arms. He must have spent the greater part of that day writing letters. In one to Speaker Lenthall he declared that the enemy were "as stubble to their swords." He paid a fine tribute to his men: "I believe I may speak it without partiality: both your Commanders and others in their several places, and soldiers also, were acted [actuated] with as much courage, as ever hath been seen in any action since this war." He then went on to make an impassioned plea: "It is easy to say, the Lord hath done this. It would do you good to see and hear our poor foot to go up and down making their boast of God. But, sir, it's in your hands, and by these eminent mercies God puts it

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more into your hands. . . . We that serve you beg of you not to own us—but God alone. We pray you own His people more and more; for they are the chariots and horsemen of Israel. Disown yourselves;—but own your authority and improve it to curb the proud and the insolent, such as would disturb the tranquillity of England, though under what specious pretences soever. Relieve the oppressed, hear the groans of poor prisoners in England. Be pleased to reform the abuses of all professions;—and if there be any one that makes many poor to make a few rich, that suits not a Commonwealth.” In these last few words we have the key-note to Cromwell’s high ideal for the State. The army had fought the long fight of the Civil War nearly to a finish; this was to be the reward.

In the hour of victory Cromwell’s thoughts turned homeward and he wrote to his wife, knowing well her terrible anxiety. She must have suffered much, separated from him and not knowing from week to week how he fared, waiting and watching. The heaviest burden of war always falls on the women. The letter runs:

“My Dearest, I have not leisure to write much. But I could chide thee that in many of thy letters thou writest to me, that I should



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not be unmindful of thee and thy little ones. Truly, if I love you not too well, I think I err not on the other hand much. Thou art dearer to me than any creature, let that suffice." Her heart might well have failed her as she read on. The toils of war had told on her husband and he was no longer the strong, vigorous man of yore: "I assure thee, I grow an old man and feel infirmities of age marvellously stealing upon me."

Some letters from the wife to the husband doubtless went astray, for some time later Cromwell wrote to complain that he had not heard from her. "I wonder you should blame me," she answered, "for writing no oftener, when I have sent three for one: I cannot but think they are miscarried. Truly if I know my own heart, I should as soon neglect myself as to omit the least thought toward you, who in doing it, I must do it to myself. But when I do write, my dear, I seldom have any satisfactory answer; which makes me think my writing is slighted; as well it may: but I cannot but think your love covers my weakness and infirmities."

Dunbar did not end the Scottish campaign, though its immediate result was that Leith and Edinburgh and part of the Lowlands were held for Parliament. Cromwell did not know

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what to do with his sick, wounded, and starving prisoners, and was obliged to liberate many of them. Parliament ordered that a medal should be struck in honour of the victory, bearing on one side a profiled head of Cromwell surmounted by the inscription "The Lord of Hosts," and on the reverse a representation of the House of Commons. There was work to be done in the following winter: moss-troopers had to be put down, isolated castles had to be taken. A touch of humour occasionally brightens the sordid story of warfare. Thus, when Colonel Fenwick summoned the Governor of Hume Castle to surrender to General Cromwell, the Governor replied: "I know not Cromwell, and as for my castle it is built on a rock." And, breaking out into verse, he declared:

"I, William of the Wastle  
Am now in my castle;  
And aw the dogs in the town  
Shanna gar me <sup>1</sup> gang down."

One cannot help feeling sorry that the spirited William was made to "gang down" by a fusillade of Colonel Fenwick's guns.

In the early part of the year the Scots, who had recovered somewhat after the Dunbar disaster, determined to crown their Scottish

<sup>1</sup> Gar me = make me.

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monarch at Scone. Charles had accepted the conditions of his northern subjects, had sworn to the Covenant which he, as his sire before him, cordially hated and intended to flout when opportunity served. He was crowned with all due ceremony, "all men making show of joy and of being united to serve His Majesty."

In the course of the spring Cromwell became so seriously ill that he thought his life's work was over. Those about him noticed that a great change had come upon him and that his arduous life was wearing him out. Parliament was in great alarm. By the middle of March the worst was over and he was able to dine with his officers and be very cheerful and pleasant. Next month he wrote a reassuring letter to his anxious wife: "I praise the Lord I am increased in strength in my outward man. But that will not satisfy me except I get a heart to love and serve my Heavenly Father better. . . . Pray for me, truly I do daily for thee, and the dear family." His daughter Betty was evidently of a frivolous turn of mind, and the father was as greatly concerned about her light-heartedness as he had been about Dick's idleness. "Mind poor Betty of the Lord's great mercy. Oh, I desire her not only to seek the Lord in her necessity, but indeed and in truth to turn to the Lord;

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and to keep close to Him; and to take heed of a departing heart, and of being cozened with worldly vanities and worldly company, which I doubt she is too subject to."

Cromwell still continued to be much of an invalid and Parliament sent down two doctors to see him and to report on his condition. They suggested that he should return to England for change of air in order to recover, but Cromwell remained at his post, and in June he was about once more and able to continue the campaign.

The Parliamentary army was ordered to assemble at its old camp on the Pentland Hills. Cromwell's first intention was to take Stirling, but here Leslie was too strongly entrenched and could not be dislodged. Cromwell sent Lambert and two regiments across the Forth to Fife, and at Inverkeithing Lambert encountered a force of Scottish soldiers and was able to report victory to his chief. On the receipt of this good news Cromwell crossed the Forth with the main body of the army, and, leaving Stirling on the left, he marched north to Perth, which surrendered to him on August 2. Leslie was thus cut off from his northern supplies.

A few days earlier the Royalists had decided that the best course was to invade England,

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and Charles, with an army of under sixteen thousand men, marched to the border and entered the country by Carlisle, taking the western route southward through Lancashire.

Cromwell decided on immediate pursuit, and on August 6, leaving Monk in Scotland to attend to affairs there, he took the eastern route southward, through Yorkshire. Both commanders hoped for reinforcements: Charles was to be grievously disappointed, for there was no popular rising in his favour, and Lord Derby, who had raised a troop, was defeated by Lilburn before he could join him. The Parliamentary army, however, was reinforced all along the line—for Cromwell had sent urgent messages to the Council of State to raise the local Militia, and so excellent was the organization that his army was increased to some thirty thousand men.

Charles was the first to reach Worcester, where he took up a strong position on the strip of land between the Severn and the Teme; he then ordered the bridges to be broken down, while he kept a detachment of his forces on the eastern bank of the river.

Cromwell marched South at the head of the Eastern Association at the average rate of some thirty miles and over a day. It was a record march in military annals, for, with none of the

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modern means of communication, it went without a hitch. At Coventry he was joined by Lambert and Harrison with reinforcements, and on August 28 they were on the outskirts of Worcester. In spite of Charles's precaution in breaking down the bridges, a few planks remained at Upton-on-Severn, seven miles below the town. Here a party of Fleetwood's troopers managed to scramble across, hold their own in a skirmish with a handful of Royalists, and repair the bridge sufficiently to make it possible to pass troops over. Cromwell built bridges of boats across the Severn and the Teme almost at the junction of the two rivers, thus gaining access to both banks and being able to pass his men backward and forward according to the fortune of war. The Parliamentary army was double that of the Royalist, so that for once the advantage in numbers was largely on their side.

The battle opened on the anniversary of Dunbar, September 3. Cromwell, leading the van, was the first to pass over the bridge of boats across the Severn to the western bank, and "set foot on the enemy's ground." Fleetwood, who had previously diverted the Royalist attention by making as though he would contest Powick Bridge, closely held by the Royalists, two miles lower down the river, left



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reinforcements there, and crossed to the Lord General's assistance by the Teme boat-bridge. The Royalists were not immediately on the spot to oppose the landing. A fierce fight ensued. The Scottish forces fought gallantly and stubbornly, but they were largely outnumbered and were beaten from hedge to hedge until driven into Worcester.

Charles, with a few Cavaliers to bear him company, watching the issue from the cathedral tower, marked the grave danger of the situation. He sent urgent orders to attack the remainder of Cromwell's army still on the eastern bank of the Severn, and himself sallied out of Worcester town at the head of all the forces he could muster. The Lord General no sooner saw this manœuvre than he himself and his detachments recrossed to the eastern bank to do further battle. For three hours they contested for mastery, at push of pike. At last the enemy were driven into the town, and the battle was finished in the streets, where there was a frightful carnage. The Royalist army was utterly defeated, the cavalry fled northward, to be pursued and taken prisoner, the infantry laid down their arms. Not a single regiment, and a very few survivors, reached Scotland. Three thousand Scots were killed, ten thousand were taken prisoners. What a sight the wretched

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town presented—the narrow streets blocked with the dead bodies of men and horses, the cathedral thronged with prisoners, knights and noblemen, the flower of Scottish chivalry! The wounded lay by the roadside dying unattended.

Charles was among the few who escaped. The story of his romantic adventures after Worcester has become almost a legend. He hid for a couple of days in an oak-tree while the soldiers were searching the wood beneath; he lodged in the huts of the peasantry; he hid in priests' holes; he dressed as a serving-man. But though there was a reward of £1000 on his head and his description was circulated abroad, there was none to betray him and he escaped to France.

Worcester virtually ended the Scottish campaign, since there was no army left to put in the field against General Monk and his regiments in Scotland. Dundee was sacked and other important towns yielded.

Worcester was Cromwell's "crowning mercy," and from that day he sheathed his sword.

## CHAPTER XVI: *New Foes Arise*

THE Puritans gave to English literature one of its greatest names—that of John Milton. As we have seen, he devoted himself to the service of the State. He was inspired by the events of the time to dedicate to Cromwell one of his magnificent sonnets:

Cromwell, our chief of men, who through a cloud  
Not of war only, but detractions rude,  
Guided by faith and matchless fortitude,  
To peace and truth thy glorious way hast ploughed,  
And on the neck of crownèd Fortune proud  
Hast reared God's trophies, and His work pursued,  
While Darwen stream, with blood of Scots imbrued,  
And Dunbar field, resounds thy praises loud,

And Worcester's laureate wreath. Yet much remains  
To conquer still: Peace hath her victories  
No less renowned than War. New foes arise  
Threat'ning to bind our souls with secular chains:  
Help us to save free conscience from the paw  
Of hireling wolves, whose gospel is their maw.

Such was Cromwell's task. Before he set to work to accomplish it—and much more beside—he was to receive full tribute of gratitude for his services to the Commonwealth. Nine

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days after his victory at Worcester he was welcomed on the outskirts of London by the Speaker and other members of the House of Commons, civic dignitaries, and Puritan gentlemen of standing, anxious to do him honour and to escort him to the capital. Eager sightseers lined the roadways waiting to cheer the victorious general in his hour of triumph. The Life-guards passed, their accoutrements glittering in the autumn sunshine; the soberly clad Puritan gentlemen rode by with dignified mien; then came the city troops and the Speaker in his coach, followed by three hundred equipages. The cavalcade rolled on—but where was the hero of the hour? He had passed all but unnoticed, having taken refuge in the Speaker's carriage. Worn out with the toils of war, he had felt unequal to a public demonstration.

As he peered forth at the country-folk and townsfolk, men, women, and children, one remarked to him: "What a crowd has come to see your Lordship's triumph!"

"Yes, but if it were to see me hanged, how many more would there be!" was the ironic reply.

The guns in St James's Park boomed their welcome; cheer upon cheer greeted his arrival—he was home once more!

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To each member of the deputation he presented a horse and a couple of Scotsmen—the latter strikes a curious note to modern ears! Few had the humanity to release their captives, who were afterward held up to ransom or sold as slaves to the colonies. Parliament voted the General four thousand pounds and the royal palace of Hampton Court as a residence, thus linking up his fortunes with that of his first known kinsman, Thomas Cromwell, for Hampton Court had been built and presented to the King by Thomas Cromwell's patron, Cardinal Wolsey. The City rendered homage to the victor by inviting him to a banquet at Merchant Taylor's Hall.

When all due honour had been paid to him, Cromwell had to get into harness once more. What was now to be the settlement of the country? What was to be the outcome of the Civil War in England, the triumphs in Ireland and Scotland? At present the Government was in the hands of what was virtually an oligarchy, the remnant of the Long Parliament, consisting of men who had once been elected and who had remained in office in spite of the many changes that had taken place. This arrangement could not go on for ever. A meeting was held at Speaker Lenthall's house in Chancery Lane to which representatives of

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Parliament and the Army were invited, to discuss the future settlement of the nation, "the old King being dead, and his son being defeated." Two solutions were suggested—one that the country should be an absolute Republic, the other that there should be a "mixture of monarchy." As Whitlocke put it: "The laws of England are so interwoven with the power and practice of monarchy, that to settle a Government without something of monarchy in it would make so great an alteration in the proceedings of our law, that you will scarce have time to rectify it, nor can we well foresee the inconveniences which will arise thereby."

Whitlocke's solution was to invite the King's third son, the Duke of York, who was too young to have any prejudices, to accept the throne on conditions. Cromwell fully saw that "that would be a business of more than ordinary difficulty," though he believed that a settlement with somewhat of monarchical power in it would be most effectual.

Was it already in Cromwell's mind what had been whispered abroad: "This man will make himself our King"?

Meantime, awaiting the tide of events, the country was ruled by the Council of State appointed by the House of Commons, consisting



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of members of Parliament and officers of the army. Cromwell was the leading spirit on the Council, and for the next nineteen months he was busily occupied with the question of what was to be the final form of government for the nation. One thing was certain in the minds of the Army party clamouring for reform, and that was that the Long Parliament must be dissolved. Unfortunately the members of the Long Parliament did not agree with this view. Cromwell urged that the question should be put to the vote. It was carried with the bare majority of two, and then with the restriction that the dissolution should not take place for three years. A spurt of activity overtook the threatened members. An Amnesty Bill, under which Royalists who had not taken part in the battle of Worcester need no longer fear punishment for actions during the Civil War, was passed. It was carried largely owing to Cromwell's insistence, but though it was a wise measure and made for peace, his part in it was misinterpreted by his enemies as an attempt to make for himself many new friends. There was much work for Parliament to do; the political union of Scotland with England was debated, as were long-needed legal and social reforms and a settlement of the system of Church government, which was in a state of chaos. Parliament was



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anxious to distract public attention by naval exploits, and all reforms were at a standstill when the country became involved in the Dutch War, which was fostered by Vane. To Cromwell especially, and to the army as a whole, the war was hateful, both because it was a conflict between two Protestant powers who should have been allies and because it laid an extra burden of expense on the impoverished country.

Hostilities finally broke out over the Navigation Act—passed expressly to damage Dutch commerce, since it aimed a blow at their carrying trade. It prohibited the importation of foreign goods to England in any but the vessel of the country where they were produced. Monk, who had seen much service, and Blake, the greatest naval commander of the Commonwealth, were to meet on the seas the renowned Dutch admirals, Reuter and Van Tromp—and to meet their match! For Blake's defeat by Van Tromp off Dungeness in 1652 was not fully revenged until the February of the following year, when in a three days' engagement he defeated the Dutch fleet off Portland. The ultimate success on the seas, both over the Dutch and in putting down Royalist privateers, raised the prestige of the Commonwealth in the eyes of Europe, but it did not serve to

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keep the members of the Long Parliament in office.

Cromwell's home life had not been without its sorrows. His son-in-law, Ireton, had died in Ireland three months after Worcester, worn out by the fatigues and anxieties of his position. Bridget was a widow, and though she soon consoled herself by marrying her husband's future successor, Fleetwood, her father felt the loss for himself and for her very deeply. Some thought that had Ireton lived he would have exercised a restraining influence over Cromwell, and his ambition would have been checked by the stern virtue of the younger man. However that may be, not long after Ireton's death Cromwell's mind, still possessed by thoughts of the future of the country, had come to a definite decision.

Walking one November day of 1652 in St James's Park, with Whitlocke as his companion, he sounded him. They conversed together on the present dangers of the State. Whitlocke laid the fault on the arrogance of the army, Cromwell on the self-seeking, greedy and unscrupulous members of Parliament. Both agreed that the Commonwealth itself was in danger from all these internal feuds. Suddenly Cromwell sprang upon his companion what had been in his mind all the time: "What if

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a man should take upon him to be King?" Whitlocke soberly pointed out grave objections, and urged that the only possible King was Charles Stuart. "My Lord General did not in words express any anger but only by looks and carriage."

For some months past repeated conferences had taken place between army officers and members of Parliament, and at last a Bill for a "New Representative"—that is a newly elected body of men—was before the House.

A meeting took place at Cromwell's rooms on April 19, 1653. Sir Henry Vane discussed the question as to whether the sitting members should remain in office during the next Parliament and should have a right to veto any elected representative whom they considered undesirable. As a matter of fact, neither Parliament nor the Army dared risk anything approaching a general election: some form of scrutiny would be necessary, even with a restricted franchise, for neither Roman Catholics nor Royalists would be electors. Vane's proposal would have meant that the Long Parliament would be reinforced by a few new men and that all the present evils would continue. Cromwell's solution was that they should "devolve their trust to some well-affected men, such as had an interest in the nation."



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The conference broke up and was summoned to meet again on the morrow for further discussion. Next morning, when Cromwell was attending his business at Whitehall, he was informed by a messenger that the House was sitting and was occupied in pushing through a Bill at top speed which would keep the present members in office. He did not believe it at first, and it was not until two further messengers confirmed the tidings that he made ready for instant action. Since the Commons had broken faith with the army council, he would take the law into his own hands. Clad as he was in his plain morning dress—a black suit with worsted stockings—accompanied by Lambert and other officers, with a band of musketeers, he rode down to the House. In gloomy silence he took his seat and listened to Vane, who was addressing the Commons. For a quarter of an hour he waited, then Vane sat down and the Speaker was about to put to the vote the question “that this Bill shall pass?”

Cromwell beckoned to Harrison and muttered to him: “This is the time I must do it.”

“Sir, the work is very great and dangerous,” Harrison replied; “therefore I desire you seriously to consider of it before you engage in it.”

“You say well,” was the curt response.

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Cromwell then rose in his place, uncovered his head, and spoke out all that was in his heart. His first words were conciliatory in appearance but ironic in intention. He praised the members for the care and pains they had taken for the public good. Then suddenly all urbanity forsook him and his harsh, strident voice rang out in bitter upbraiding for "their injustice, delays of justice, and self-interest."

"It is a strange language this; unusual within the walls of Parliament and from one we have so highly honoured, and one . . ."

"Come, come," thundered Cromwell, "we have had enough of this. I will put an end to your prating."

Crushing his hat on his head, he stepped out upon the floor of the House, stamping his feet in anger. "It is not fit that you should sit here any longer! You have sat too long here for any good you have been doing lately. You shall now give place to better men."

The musketeers entered at his word of command to Harrison, and all the time he blazed out at the outraged members like a quick-firing gun.

"You call yourself a Parliament, you are no Parliament. I say you are no Parliament: some of you are drunkards"—and his eye pierced an unfortunate member who was known to

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be self-indulgent. Still more contemptuous phrases were hurled at other sinners whose private record would not bear scrutiny. They quivered under the lash of his tongue.

Vane's voice was heard in the general uproar. "This is not honest," he said; "yea, it is against morality and honesty."

"Oh, Sir Henry Vane, Sir Henry Vane," broke in Cromwell, "the Lord deliver me from Sir Henry Vane. . . . Corrupt unjust persons scandalous to the profession of the Gospel; how can you be a Parliament for God's people? Depart, I say, and let us have done with you. In the name of God—go."

"Take away that bauble!" he commanded, as he caught sight of the mace lying on the Speaker's table.

"Fetch him down," he went on, as his glance fell on the Speaker himself. Lenthall stood his ground but was removed, and other members gradually dispersed.

Cromwell fired a parting shot: "It is you who have forced me to do this. I have sought the Lord day and night that He would rather slay me than put me upon the doing of this work." He snatched the obnoxious Bill from the clerk, seized the records, cleared the House, locked the door, and, putting the key in his pocket, returned to Whitehall.

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In the afternoon he attended the Council of State. Since it had been created by Parliament it no longer had any sanction. The members were sitting. "If you are met here as private persons," he informed them, "you shall not be disturbed; but if as a Council of State, this is no place for you; and since you cannot but know what was done in the House this morning, so take notice that the Parliament is dissolved."

Bradshaw, who was in the chair, would not thus be dismissed.

"We have heard what you did at the House in the morning," he said, "and before many hours all England will hear it; but, Sir, you are mistaken to think that the Parliament is dissolved; for no power under Heaven can dissolve them but themselves; therefore take you notice of that."

Bradshaw was the only man whose speech would qualify Cromwell's later statement: "We did not hear a dog bark at their going."

## CHAPTER XVII: *Praise God Barebones*

ON April 21, 1653, England was entirely without any form of government. A Council of State was established which consisted of a dozen men with Cromwell at their head, since Vane refused the post. A freely elected Parliament was out of the question, and as a temporary expedient Cromwell decided to summon a Convention consisting of "divers persons fearing God, and of approved Fidelity and Honesty." They were bidden to appear at the Council Chamber in Whitehall in the beginning of July. They were for the most part the nominees of Puritan ministers, without the slightest knowledge of Parliamentary business—virtue alone was the qualification for statesmanship. One hundred and forty members were thus chosen, Cromwell's son Henry among them. Fairfax declined to sit, but Blake and Monk accepted, as did eighteen members of the Long Parliament. There was great surprise that so many consented to come, and from such hands "to take upon them the supreme Authority of the Nation: considering how little right Cromwell and his officers had to give it, or these gentlemen to take it." It is interesting to

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know that Irish and Scottish interests were represented by special nominees.

For the most part the members were men of some distinction, though one, Mr Praise God Barebones, rested his sole claim to notoriety on giving the assembly its nickname. The members of the Convention soon after meeting declared they were a Parliament—and as “The Little Parliament” the assembly is also known.

The first meeting was held on July 4, 1653. Each person was given a ticket with his name on his entrance. The members were seated round a table while Cromwell stood near the window. To keep the assembly in the right note of godliness, Frederic Rouse, who had written a second-rate metrical version of the Psalms, was elected Speaker. When all was in readiness Cromwell addressed the members in a remarkable speech, the main purport of which was that they were summoned by God’s will to do God’s business, and that in doing it they should above all be tolerant of other men’s views. He spoke of “that series of Providences wherein the Lord hath appeared, dispensing wonderful things to these nations from the beginning of our troubles to this very day. . . . The King removed and brought to justice and many great ones with him. The House of Peers laid aside. The House of Commons itself the representative



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of the people of England winnowed, sifted, and brought to a handful. . . . I think I may say for myself and my fellow-officers, that we had rather desired and studied healing and looking forward than to rake into sores and to look backward.

“Truly God hath called you to do this work, by, I think, as wonderful Providences as ever passed upon the sons of men in so short a time. And truly, I think, taking the argument of necessity for the Government must not fall; taking the appearance of the hand of God in this thing—I think you would have been loath it should have been resigned into the hands of wicked men and enemies!”

The assembly was convinced that it had instituted the Reign of the Saints on earth. It was the first and only attempt to govern the country entirely by the precepts of the Bible, to have Christianity in the saddle riding forth to redress human wrongs. But since politics, like other callings, requires special training, it was a government by amateurs, leavened by a few old parliamentary hands. The members knew in a general way the reforms required, but they failed to grasp the necessity of advancing slowly. The new brooms swept too clean. The Church, property, law, and society were all to be set on a new and better basis. Parliament reckoned without the vested interests that were imperilled.

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Too much reform got on the nation's nerves. The members were charged with acting on a design to ruin property with "enmity to knowledge and a blind and ignorant fanaticism."

"I am more troubled now by the knave than the fool," declared Cromwell, who grew alarmed at their diligence and their one policy of "Overturn, Overturn!" By nature a Conservative, in the stress of public affairs a practical politician—an opportunist, as we should call him now—he knew that they were going too far and that "root and branch" reform was impracticable.

He opened his mind freely in a letter to his new son-in-law, Lieutenant-General Fleetwood:

"Truly I never more needed all helps from my Christian friends than now! Fain would I have my service accepted of the Saints, if the Lord will;—but it is not so. Being of different judgments, and 'those' of each sort seeking most to propagate their own, that spirit of kindness that is to them all, is hardly accepted of any. I hope I can say it, my life has been a willing sacrifice—and I hope, for them *all*." For a moment he then forgot his public preoccupations in the thought of his daughter and her newly born child: "My love to thy dear Wife—whom indeed I entirely love, both naturally, and upon the best account;—and my blessing, if it be worth anything, upon thy little Babe."

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The Barebones Parliament sat for five months. Carlyle, in his trenchant vein, declares that "the farther it advanced toward real Christianity in human affairs, the louder grew the shrieks of Sham-Christianism." This is as it may be. The fact is that, unless sanctity be allied to a rare genius for statesmanship, the children of this world are wiser in politics than the children of light, since they understand men as they are and not as they would have them be. At least these Saints had wisdom enough to know that they did not carry the country with them. On December 2, 1653, it was moved that the sitting of the Parliament was no longer for the good of the Commonwealth, and that the members should deliver back to the Lord General Cromwell the powers they had received from him. A minority dissented and remained in their seats. The Serjeant shouldered the mace, and, accompanied by the Speaker and the majority, left the House and proceeded to Whitehall, where Cromwell expressed—some said simulated—surprise and emotion when they announced the formal resignation of their office. When this had been accepted a file of soldiers, with a couple of colonels to lead them, turned out the sitting members.

The country was once more without a government, but the Council of State, appointed

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by the Little Parliament, had drawn up a written constitution known as the Instrument of Government. By this it was settled that a new Parliament should be elected to consist of four hundred members for England, with thirty apiece for Scotland and Ireland. A certain property qualification was necessary to secure a vote, and Roman Catholics and Malig-nants, as the Royalists were called, were to be excluded from the franchise, the former permanently, the latter temporarily. At the head of the government was to be a Lord Protector with strictly limited powers—but they were those of a constitutional king. He had the right to confer honours, to control the army and navy with the consent of Parliament, to pardon offenders, and to give assent to Bills—but should he withhold his assent for twenty days, the Bill became law without his approval.

On the afternoon of December 16, 1653, Cromwell rode forth from Whitehall for the installation. Before him went the Commissioners of the Great Seal, the judges and barons fully robed, the Council of the Commonwealth, the Lord Mayor and Aldermen in official attire. Lastly came the man of destiny, soberly clad in plain black velvet, a gold band round his hat, accompanied by the officers of the army.

The ceremony took place in the Court of

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Chancery, where a chair of state was the substitute for a throne. Cromwell stood uncovered as the terms of the powers conferred upon him were read out. He signed the parchment and took the oath to observe its conditions in face of them all. Then, formally seated, the Commissioner approached and delivered up the Seal, to receive it again at his hands, and the Lord Mayor went through the same ceremony with his cap and sword. When this was over the procession re-formed with the Lord Mayor in advance carrying the sword. It then wended its way to Whitehall, through the crowds of eager sightseers who thronged the cobbled streets.

Heralds proclaimed the Lord Protector at the Old Exchange, the Palace Yard, and other places. Whitehall, St James's, Somerset House, and Windsor were reserved for his official use. The Lord Mayor and Common Council entertained him magnificently.

What was the Puritan Court like, with the frugal, homely Elizabeth Cromwell—Her Highness the Protectress—as hostess? It was a decorous Court and only men and women of good character could gain entrance there. In this there was no distinction of persons. When Christina, Queen of Sweden, the only child of the famous soldier Gustavus Adolphus, a lady of



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many adventures, expressed her intention of visiting England, Cromwell was distinctly discouraging, for he feared the effect of her bad example.

The Cromwell family was not without its critics, and Mrs Hutchinson, with a pen dipped in dislike, is outspoken in her comments: "His wife and children were setting up for principality, which suited no better with any of them than scarlet on the ape; only, to speak the truth of himself, he had much natural greatness, and well became the place he had usurped. His daughter Fleetwood was humbled, and not exalted with these things, but the rest were insolent fools. Claypole, who married his daughter, and his son Henry, were two debauched, ungodly cavaliers. Richard was a peasant in his nature, yet gentle and virtuous, but became not greatness."

Cromwell's mother lived to see his rise to supreme power and in 1654 she died at the age of ninety-four. A close tie had bound mother and son. She did not rejoice in his greatness, for it gave her hourly fear that an assassin's shot would find its billet in his breast. It was only by his daily and twice daily visits, in spite of all his business preoccupation, that she was reassured. In her last conscious moment she was blessing him: "My dear son, I leave my heart with thee. Good-night."

## CHAPTER XVIII: *Healing and Settling*

NINE months were to pass before the new Parliament met. In the interval the Protector, with the Council of State, passed eighty-two ordinances, which had the force of law. The three main subjects dealt with were Church Government, Law, and Manners.

How was the State Church to be governed? What toleration was to be shown to those outside the pale? Cromwell, whose broad-mindedness grew with years, would have had toleration for all. He would have permitted Mohammedans to worship in their own way rather than that one of God's children should be persecuted for conscience' sake. Roman Catholics and Jews he would have left free to exercise their religion in seclusion but public feeling was against him. The State Church was to be Puritan in its widest sense. Independents, Baptists, and Presbyterians were all entitled to officiate provided they convinced a committee of Triers that they were men with the grace of God in them, of holy unblameable conversation, and fit to preach the Gospel. Inefficient ministers were expelled from their livings. The

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Prayer Book was forbidden, and the churches were closed to Episcopalians, who were permitted to worship only in private.

Simpler processes of law, so that it should be "plain and less chargeable to the people," were ordained. It was even set down that all cases should be settled on the day of hearing. The ordinance was unpopular with the lawyers, who declared that they would not accept it; moreover, it was unpractical. Cromwell was far in advance of his time in his attempt to reform criminal law. He would have abolished the death penalty for anything but murder—yet it was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that this piece of humane legislation was put upon the statute book.

The narrowest form of Puritanism came out when the Council passed ordinances restricting the pleasures of the people. Maypoles had been pulled down, by order, ten years earlier; plays and playhouses had long been banned. Bear-baiting, cock-fighting, and duelling—for which, it is true, nothing can be said—had all been suppressed. Horse-racing was forbidden for six months, but only in order to prevent the meetings from being used as a cloak for Royalist gatherings. Drunkenness and swearing were to be severely punished; minstrels and fiddlers who brought music to the countryside were to

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be dealt with as vagrants—why it is hard to tell. The strict keeping of the Lord's Day was to be observed; on that day inns and alehouses were closed, and, as travelling was looked upon as a godless pursuit, an order from a justice was necessary before one took a journey on Sunday. Even so innocent a recreation as walking might be regarded as "vain and profane" and treated accordingly. In spite of all these rules, until the Major-Generals (of whom we shall hear later) descended upon the country to act as policemen, with a watchful eye on lawbreakers, judges were lenient and juries refused to convict. Had it not been so, England would have been very moral—and very miserable!

Cromwell was always greatly interested in education. In some ways it was a cheaper luxury then than it is now—for example, in the seventeenth century tuition at Eton cost only £1 a term. Cromwell suggested the institution of a college at Durham, but the scheme was stopped at the Restoration and the city had to wait for nearly two hundred years before it owned its university. He was Chancellor of the University of Oxford, and during his Protectorate the older universities flourished, producing many men of learning.

On Sunday, September 3, 1654—Cromwell's

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auspicious day—he met the first Parliament of his Protectorate. The state opening took place on the following day, when the Protector rode in state to Westminster Abbey, accompanied by his son Henry, Lambert, and a full retinue. After the service and a sermon the members adjourned to the Painted Chamber. Here Cromwell, in one of his memorable speeches, harangued them on the past and the future.

“You are met here,” he said, “on the greatest occasion that, I believe, England ever saw; having upon your shoulders the interests of three great nations with the territories belonging to them;—and truly, I believe I may say it without any hyperbole, you have upon your shoulders the interests of all the Christian people in the world.”

Once more he reverted to God’s dealings with the Commonwealth, saying that the only direct parallel to it in all history was when God brought Israel out of Egypt, “by many signs and wonders toward a place of peace.” Cromwell, with his instinct for law and order, had little sympathy with the Levellers, the Socialists of his day. “Did not that Levelling principle tend to the reducing of all to an equality. . . . What was the purport of it, but to make the tenant as liberal a for-



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tune as the landlord. . . . The men of that principle, after they had served their own turns, would then have cried up property and interest fast enough." He reviewed what had already been done for the "Healing and Settling" of the country, the satisfactory relation of the Commonwealth with foreign states, the conclusion of the Dutch War. But there was much yet to do. "It's one of the great ends of calling this Parliament, that the Ship of the Commonwealth may be brought into a safe harbour; which, I assure you, it will not be, without your counsel and advice."

The members had no sooner taken their places in the House than they began to discuss "by what authority they came hither, and whether that which had convened them had a lawful power to that purpose." Cromwell was sorely tried, for if time were to be wasted in discussing their position there would be no end to it. They promised to accept him as Protector for five years. This would not do: certain fundamentals must be accepted. Once more Cromwell decided to coerce the House by what was virtually martial law. The Lord Mayor was bidden to guard the City; Westminster Hall was surrounded by soldiers, the doors of the House were locked. The astonished members, barred entrance, were

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summoned to meet the Protector at the Painted Chamber. He was deeply moved. His position had been called in question, and he felt that he had never sought it.

“I called not myself to this place,” he said; “I say again, I called not myself to this place! Of that God is witness—and I have many witnesses who, I do believe, could lay down their lives bearing witness to the truth of that. . . . If my calling be from God, and my testimony from the People—God and the People shall take it from me.” At the end of the wars, he told them, he had hoped to return to private life: “I begged to be dismissed of my charge; I begged it again and again—and God be the Judge between me and all men if I lie in this matter.” After the dissolution of the Little Parliament he had had unlimited power. When the Council of State framed a constitution, he was told that unless he would undertake the Government there would be no settlement. He had not received anything which put him into a higher capacity than before; but his power was limited and he could not act without the consent of a Council. Was not their very presence in the House of Commons, brought thither by Writs directed to the several Sheriffs, a proof that they had accepted the Instrument of Government? “It was understood that I

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was the Protector and the authority that called you. That I was in the possession of the Government by a right from God and man.”

He then went on to insist on four fundamentals which the members must accept: the Government was to be by a single Person and a Parliament; Parliaments were not to make themselves perpetual; liberty of conscience should be respected: the Protector and Parliament were to have joint power over the militia.

Only such as would sign the parchment containing these stipulations might re-enter the House. One hundred members signed in an hour—three hundred in all. Bradshaw, Haselrig and other Republicans refused.

The Purge did not make much difference and Parliament continued discussions which were contrary to the agreement. After bearing with it for the requisite five months the Protector dismissed it on January 23, 1655.

For the next eighteen months the country was under military law and Cromwell was a despot. His difficulties were great. As he wrote to Fleetwood: “The wretched jealousies that are amongst us, and the spirit of calumny turn all into gall and wormwood.”

England was divided into ten districts, and over each of these was set a Major-General, who had to keep order, shut down alehouses,

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see that Sunday was observed in the very letter of the law, repress Levellers and other enemies of the Commonwealth, control the local militia, and levy heavy burdens on the Royalists for its upkeep.

Little wonder that plots against the Protector's life were rife, that Royalist hopes were high! Cromwell kept himself well informed, and his knowledge of conspiracies at home and abroad was almost uncanny. Scattered Royalist risings took place in England, and one under Penruddock gave a good deal of trouble, but it was finally crushed, the leader was apprehended, and with fourteen of his followers he paid forfeit with his life.

Other more innocent persons suffered a worse fate. The Quaker movement was in its infancy, and one, James Nayler, at the head of a body of eight men and women, singing as they rode through Bristol town, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth," was arrested by the local Major-General and sent on trial to London. Here he was sentenced, as a blasphemer, "To stand in the pillory two hours at Westminster, to be whipped by the hangman through the streets from Westminster to the Old Exchange, and there to stand in the pillory two hours more, and that his tongue be bored through with a hot iron, and that he be stigmatized in the forehead

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with the letter B.” As if this were not sufficient penalty even for the most extravagant opinions, he was to be returned to Bristol, there to be compelled to ride through the city, with his face to the horse’s tail, and publicly whipped at the Market Place. When all these barbarities had been executed he was to be returned to London and imprisoned at Bridewell.

Nayler was a foolish extremist, but all the early Quakers suffered persecution. Their founder, George Fox, when he had been seized by the soldiers, appealed to the Protector. He has recorded in his Diary how he had much discourse with Cromwell and explained to him what he and the Friends—as the members of the new sect were called—had been led to think concerning Christ and his apostles. “That is very good; that is true,” agreed the Protector. “Other persons coming in, persons of quality so called, I drew back; lingered; and then was for retiring: he caught me by the hand and with moist beaming eyes said: ‘Come again to my house! If thou and I were but an hour a day together we should be nearer one to the other. I wish no more harm to thee than I do to my own soul.’ ”

## CHAPTER XIX: *Will he be King?*

FOR eighteen months military rule continued under the Protector, the Council of State, and the hated Major-Generals. At the end of that time the Protector, face to face with Charles I's perpetual difficulty of finding money for home and foreign expenses, determined to summon another Parliament.

Great excitement prevailed in the country over the elections. Many men felt the call to become candidates, but few were chosen unless they could first of all satisfy the Major-Generals as to their principles and practices. The Major-Generals themselves were all returned. Many electors abstained from voting, holding that it mattered little who was chosen, since the Protector would have his own way in any case, and if opposed he would call in the military to turn out offenders.

Cromwell, as his custom was, addressed the newly elected representatives in the Painted Chamber before they actually met in the House. In a lengthy and somewhat involved and discursive speech on the condition of the country he hotly defended the appointment of the Major-Generals: "I think if ever anything



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were justifiable as to necessity, and honest in every respect, this was." Three months later, however, he had to bow to Parliamentary will and allow them to be dismissed.

A surprise was in store for the members when they left the Painted Chamber. Before entering the House each one had to produce a certificate that he was approved by "His Highness's council," and those without this passport were denied admission. In this way over a hundred members were excluded, not only to their own bitter resentment—for their appeal to be admitted was disregarded—but to the indignation of the whole House. The Protector could not, even with all the precautions that had been taken, face a free Parliament.

And yet he could not manage it. This assembly was to be no exception to the rule that he could not get on with Parliaments: he had neither the necessary tact nor the constitutional sense, since he had gradually come to believe that necessity knew no law. This second Parliament of the Protectorate was bent on having the Government of the country on a legal and constitutional basis. Curiously enough, this led to a widely accepted demand that Cromwell should take the title of King. A malcontent, Miles Sindercombe,

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attempted the Protector's life by setting light to Whitehall Chapel, hoping to shoot him in the ensuing confusion, but was foiled in his attempt. The vote of congratulation passed by Parliament was amended by one member moving that "it would tend very much to the preservation of himself and us that His Highness would be pleased to take upon him the government according to the ancient constitution."

On February 23, 1656, an amended Instrument of Government was brought before the House. It offered the Protector the title of King and authorized the formation of a Second Chamber to replace the former House of Lords. This scheme was known as "The Humble Petition and Advice." After a month's consultation and negotiations between the Protector and Parliament, Speaker Lenthall, accompanied by members of the House, repaired to the Banqueting Hall at Whitehall and formally presented it to the Protector. Cromwell was in a difficult situation: if he accepted the title he would placate the majority in Parliament, but offend the army by which he had risen to power. He told them that he must have leisure to consider the matter. "I have lived the latter part of my age in—if I may say so—the fire; in the midst of troubles. But all the things that have befallen me since I was first engaged in the

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affairs of this Commonwealth, if they could be supposed to be all brought into such a compass that I could take a view of them at once, truly I do not think they would 'so move,' nor do I think they ought so to move my heart and spirit with that fear and reverence of God that becomes a Christian, as the thing that hath now been offered by you to me."

For three days of anxious thought and deliberation Cromwell considered the proposal. He summoned the House to hear his decision. The two aims of his life, he said, had been civil and religious liberty: "Upon these two interests, if God shall account me worthy I shall live and die. And I must say if I were to give an account before a greater tribunal than an earthly one; if I were asked why I have engaged all along in the late war, I could give no answer that were not a wicked one if I did not comprehend these two ends." He was grateful for their offer, but it was not fitting for him to accept it.

The matter did not end here. Parliament would not take "no" for an answer, and further negotiations took place. The Protector conferred with his leading counsellors, and for hours they were shut up together in private discourse. Even in these weighty conferences there were lighter moments, and sometimes the boisterous

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moods of his earlier manhood would return upon him and he would be very cheerful. "And laying aside his greatness he would be exceedingly familiar; and by way of diversion would make verses with them, play crambo with them, and every one must try his fancy. He commonly called for tobacco-pipes and a candle and would now and then take tobacco himself."

The leaders of the army made their position plain and signified that they would lay down their commands if Cromwell were King. Seven and twenty officers, with Pride at their head, presented a petition to Parliament against any revival of the monarchy.

A compromise was finally reached. The Protector accepted "The Humble Petition and Advice," by which a Second Chamber was to be created, with members chosen by himself, to sit for life. He accepted the authority to nominate his successor, but he refused the title of King.

In order to emphasize the fact that Cromwell was now appointed by Parliament to the headship of the state a second installation took place, this time at Westminster Hall, with all but royal ceremonial. His Highness sat under a canopy of state on the Coronation Chair, which had been brought from the Abbey. Speaker

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Lenthall came forward and in the name of Parliament presented him with a robe of purple velvet, lined with ermine, which was placed upon his shoulders. The Speaker then delivered to him the symbols of his office—a richly gilt and embossed Bible, a sceptre of massive gold, and a sword. The oath was administered to him, and prayer was offered up for God's blessing on Protector and People.

This was Cromwell's hour. As he sat enthroned, the sceptre in his hand, foreign ambassadors on either side, the great dignitaries of the land standing in his presence, and heard the blare of trumpets and the shouts of the populace, he had reached the summit of human glory. Not by divine right, nor by the right of sword, but by the right conferred on him by Parliament, he was the uncrowned King of England!

This great man who had wielded so much power was now beginning to show signs of the arduous life he had led, and he was often ill with a return of the feverish complaint that he had suffered from in Scotland and Ireland. With the reopening of Parliament six months later his troubles began again, for it was evident that no real settlement had been effected. "The Other House" (as the Second Chamber was called) and the House of Commons





CROMWELL READING TO HIS FAMILY





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were soon at loggerheads. To the disgust of the ultra-Republicans, Cromwell had conferred on the Second Chamber the title of Lords. There was also some doubt as to the extent of their duties: were they to have power to make laws or were they only to advise on them?

The Protector well knew that the incessant disputes were but fuel to the fire of the growing Royalist agitation. He went down to the House, wrought up with anger, to insist that they should now stand by the new constitution. Once more in the bitterness of his heart he bade them remember: "I sought not this place. I speak it before God, Angels and Men: I DID NOT. You sought me for it, you brought me to it, and I took my oath to be faithful to the interest of these nations, to be faithful to the Government."

No reconciliation seemed possible. Ten days later Cromwell, accompanied by a military guard, rode in his coach to Westminster, summoned both houses before him and in words of stinging rebuke dissolved Parliament. "And let God be the judge between you and me," was his parting shot.

## CHAPTER XX: *Foreign Policy*

**H**E once more joined us to the continent—sang the poet Marvell of Cromwell's achievements abroad. Even Clarendon was able to say that his greatness at home was eclipsed by his greatness abroad.

The Protector had a threefold aim in his relation with foreign states: to spread Protestantism, forming if possible an alliance of all Protestant Powers; to extend English commerce; to prevent the restoration of the Stuarts by foreign interference.

The Dutch War, instituted largely for commercial purposes, has already been mentioned, as has Cromwell's disapproval of it. In the first Parliament of his Protectorate he was able to announce peace with the Dutch, and England's supremacy at sea was established. This was followed by treaties signed with the northern Protestant states of Sweden and Denmark. And, over and above this, a commercial treaty was concluded with Catholic Portugal, allowing England to trade with her colonies.

For a time the Commonwealth was on good terms with Spain and an alliance between the two countries was discussed. The Protector's terms, however, were unreasonable,

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for not only did he demand the right to trade with the Spanish-American colonies, but he desired the assurance that English residents in Spain should be allowed to worship as they pleased. The demands were rejected, and war with Spain followed. In 1655 Admiral Penn and General Venables, with a fleet of thirty-eight ships, were sent out to the West Indies with the object of taking Hispaniola (Haiti). They sailed to the island and attempted to take the capital of San Domingo, but disastrously failed. The expedition was ill-equipped and ill-managed, and the soldiers suffered terribly from thirst and bad food. English prestige was partially restored by the capture of Jamaica.

Blake's glory was not dimmed by this campaign, for he had been previously sent out, under secret orders, to the Mediterranean, to avenge injuries to English commerce or insults to the English flag. He successfully bombarded Tunis and destroyed the fortifications. When the war with Spain broke out he hovered round the Spanish coast to attempt the capture of her treasure-ships. His most brilliant exploit was at Santa Cruz, off Teneriffe, where he captured the entire Spanish Plate fleet without losing one of his own ships. It was also his last exploit, for on the journey home he was stricken with a mortal illness. His prayer to

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stand once more on English soil was unanswered, for he died within sight of Plymouth Sound on August 7, 1657.

Laden with spoil of the South, fulfilled with the glory  
of achievement,

And freshly crowned with never dying fame,  
Sweeping by shores where the names are the names of  
the victories of England,

Across the Bay the squadron homeward came.

There lay the Sound and the Island with green leaves  
down beside the water,

The town, the Hoe, the masts, with sunset fired—  
Dreams! ay dreams of the dead! for the great heart  
faltered on the threshold,

And darkness took the land his soul desired.<sup>1</sup>

Spain, as we have seen, had failed to secure the friendship of the Commonwealth, but France, then swayed by the astute Italian, Cardinal Mazarin, who had kept a watchful eye on the rise of Cromwell, was more fortunate. Spain was a declining Power: France, as a result of the Thirty Years War, in which many of the continental nations had been embroiled, was growing in wealth and power.

While Cromwell was debating in his mind the most profitable course to take, England and all Protestant Europe rang with horror at the news of the persecution of the Vaudois peasantry.

<sup>1</sup> Henry Newbolt, *The Death of Admiral Blake*, by permission of the author.

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These inoffensive villagers, Protestant to the core, failing to be converted to Catholicism by the command of the Duke of Savoy, were ruthlessly expelled from their homes, and if they showed any resistance were massacred.

Cromwell's noble and generous spirit was roused to the utmost by this atrocity. He received the news with tears. Immediately he headed a subscription-list for the sufferers with a magnificent donation of £2000, and ordered a day of humiliation and prayer, with house-to-house collections on behalf of the victims. Their cause was pleaded in sober letters to Protestant states and in passionate verse by Milton:

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones

Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;

Even them who kept Thy Truth so pure of old,

When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones,

Forget not: in Thy Book record their groans

Who were Thy sheep, and in their ancient fold

Slain by the bloody Piemontese that rolled

Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans

The vales redoubled to the hills, and they

To Heav'n. Their martyred blood and ashes sow

O'er all th' Italian fields, where still doth sway

The triple tyrant: that from these may grow

A hundredfold, who, having learnt Thy Way,

Early may fly the Babylonian woe.

Cromwell made his understanding with France, then at war with Spain, dependent on her willing-



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ness to redress this cruel wrong and compel the Duke of Savoy to cease from persecution.

Mazarin consented, and Cromwell signed the Treaty of Paris on March 23, 1657. In it he agreed to help France against Spain in the Netherlands, and to send 6000 men and vessels of the fleet to assist in the capture of Gravelines. The French General Turenne remarked on the fine quality of Cromwell's Ironsides, veterans who had seen long service—there were none finer in Europe, he declared.

As a reward for her successful assistance England gained a footing on the Continent in the cession of Mardyke and Dunkirk. The young Louis XIV sent an embassy to Cromwell, bearing the royal gift of a magnificent jewelled sword. All was well abroad except for the fear of Spain's assistance in the restoration of the Stuarts. But the cost of the war and other financial difficulties pressed heavily at home.

## CHAPTER XXI: *Death of Cromwell*

WITH the dismissal of the second Parliament of the Protectorate the end, though none suspected it, was in sight. For the last thirty years—he was now fifty-eight—Cromwell's life had been devoted to the public weal, to political and religious freedom. He had lived, he had worked, he had suffered, he had made mistakes—and small wonder that at times he yearned to “have lived under my woodside, to have kept a flock of sheep.” Retirement, however, was not for him, but his desire to be at rest was approaching its fulfilment. As a soldier he had stood the rigours of many campaigns and had often been ill. As a politician he had stood the mental strain of many a fight to preserve the Commonwealth. It was time to lay down his arms. The iron hand was beginning to lose its grip, the iron will could not triumph over physical infirmities for ever. “I look upon this to be the great duty of my place,” he had said to the two Houses of Parliament; “as being set on a watch-tower to see what may be for the good of these nations.” He was now to be relieved of his post.

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If the affairs of state were difficult and troublesome his own private affairs were tragic. His youngest daughter, Frances Cromwell, had recently lost her husband, Robert Rich, after four months of marriage; his well-loved daughter, Elizabeth Claypole, was bereft of one of her sons and now herself lay dying at Hampton Court. "She had great sufferings, great exercises of spirit," and her father's heart was wrung at the sight of her distress. On August 6 she died. Cromwell fell ill a few days later and was confined to his room. Once before, when he was mourning for his boy, he had turned, as he did now, to St Paul's Epistle to the Philippians to read, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

"This Scripture did once save my life," he said, "when my eldest son died, which went as a dagger to my heart, indeed it did."

A low fever seized him and it turned to ague, but he still continued to attend to the affairs of state and to transact necessary business. On August 20 George Fox went to Hampton Court to plead with him once more for the sufferings of the Friends, and met the Protector riding in the Park. "I saw and felt a waft of death go forth against him, and when I came to him he looked like a dead man," he wrote in his Diary.

## *Death of Cromwell*

The news of Cromwell's illness spread throughout the country and fervent prayers went up for his recovery. He himself confidently hoped that God, "who was far above nature," would restore him to health. He rallied a little and the physicians ordered his removal to Whitehall—his last journey. He grew gradually worse, but his mind, clear as ever, was possessed with the thought of God's dealings with the human soul. "Is it possible to fall from grace?" he asked a minister in attendance. He was reassured. "Then I am safe, for I know that I was once in grace." His wife and children stood weeping round him and he spoke words of counsel. "Love not the world. I say unto you it is no good that you should love the world."

On August 30 a terrible storm broke over the country—prophetic to some of the Protector's coming doom, to others of the release of a mighty soul. He was asked to name a successor and murmured: "Richard." Whether Richard's name was the one he had written in that sealed paper which could never be found at Hampton Court, none ever knew.

In his dying hour Cromwell prayed for the nation: "And I may, I will, come to Thee, for Thy people. Thou hast made me, though very unworthy, a mean instrument to do them some

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good, and Thee service; and many of them have set too high a value upon me, though others wish and would be glad of my death; Lord, however Thou do dispose of me, continue and go on to do good for them. Give them consistency of judgment, one heart, and mutual love; and go on to deliver them, and with the work of reformation, and make the name of Christ glorious in the world. Teach those who look too much upon Thy instruments to depend more upon Thyself. Pardon such as desire to trample on the dust of a poor worm for they are Thy people too. And pardon the folly of this short prayer—even for Jesus Christ's sake. And give us a good night if it be Thy pleasure."

On September 2 he spoke again of what was nearest to his heart: "I would be willing to live to be further serviceable to God and His people: but my work is done." After a restless night he was urged to take some nourishment. "It is not my design to drink or sleep; but my design is to make what haste I can to be gone."

The sun rose on September 3, that fateful day of two gallant fights. It was evident to those about him that the "one fight more, the best and the last," was all but over. At four in the afternoon he lay dead.

## CHAPTER XXII: *Epilogue*

FOR nearly two centuries Cromwell's name and fame were to suffer detraction, then Carlyle was to come forward and proclaim him with trumpet-blast a man of truth, the hero as King. "A brave bad man," a hypocrite and fanatic—so he was judged by those whose vision was clouded by the passions of the time. The verdict of posterity has been otherwise. The courage and character which he demanded of his fighting men were in him. His inalienable belief in God's direct intervention in human affairs was as rooted as Joan of Arc's.

As a soldier Cromwell ranks with the greatest; he was a general of genius, and he never suffered defeat. As a statesman he does not hold so high a place. He was without political foresight, an opportunist who solved the difficult problems of the age as they arose, and hence laid himself open to a charge of inconsistency. The work he aspired to do, and in some measure accomplished, was largely undone by the Restoration. Yet he had shaped the destinies of a people.

His private life was without reproach. His tender love for wife and children is evident at every turn.



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Would he, if the shadows of death had not been gathering round him, have named Richard as his successor? What hope could there have been that such a weakling could uphold the Commonwealth?

The sequel is soon told. Parliament and the army once more strove for mastery and Richard was but a cat's-paw between them. After a few months of nominal power he dissolved Parliament, and his rule was over.

The time was ripe for Restoration, and the following year, on May 29, 1660, Charles II entered London in triumph. The reign of the Puritans was at an end.

On the twelfth anniversary of the execution of Charles I the Royalists, baulked of their revenge on the living, settled their accounts with the dead. The bodies of Cromwell, Bradshaw, and Ireton were taken from their graves and drawn on sledges through Holburn to Tyburn. There they hung upon the gallows till sunset, when they were cut down and beheaded, the bodies flung into the pit beneath, the heads fixed on poles and set on Westminster Hall for all to see.

Beneath the city's street Cromwell's body lies with the roar of mighty London ever booming overhead.

















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